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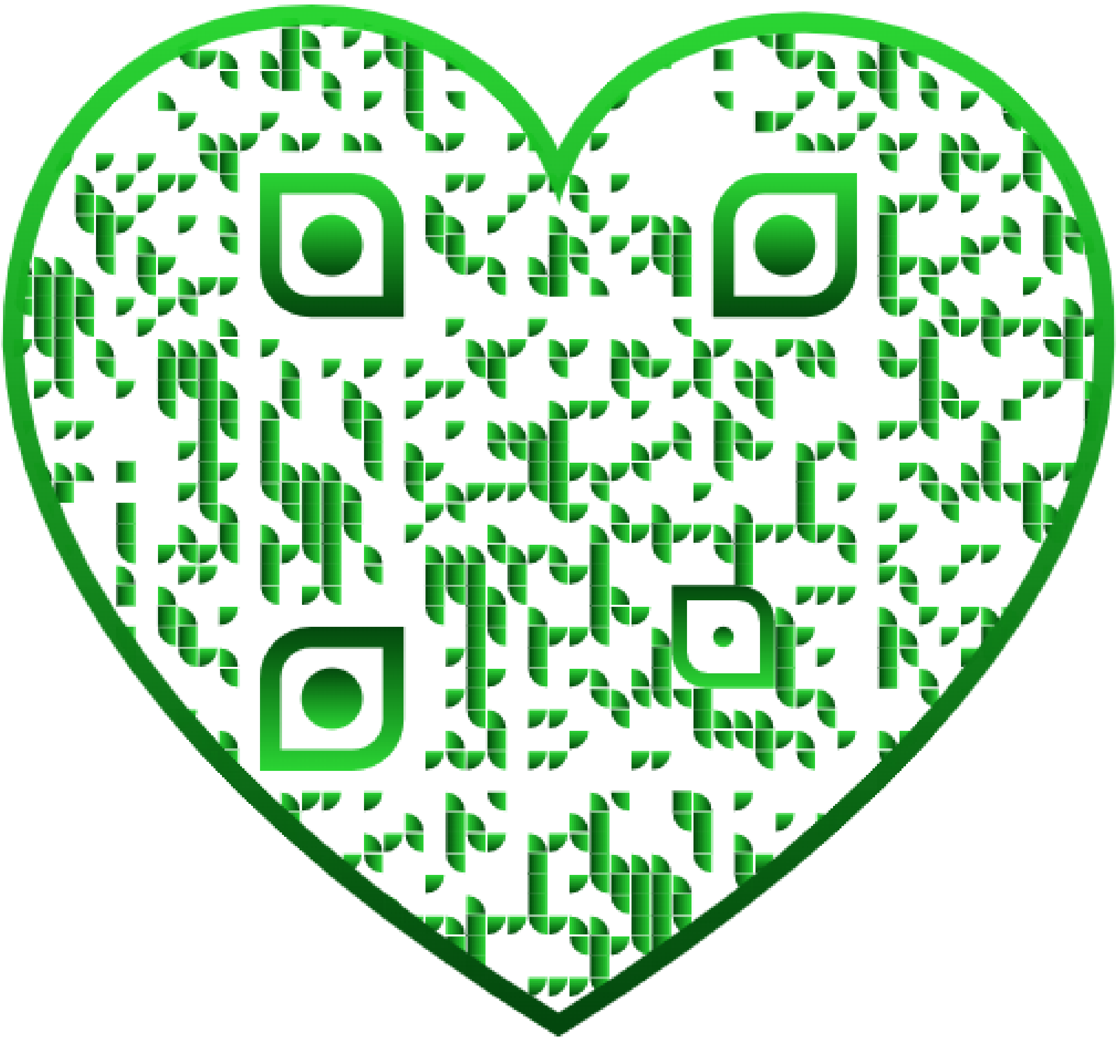

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COMMENT

EVIJA EMPHATICALLY SILENCES THE CRITICS

We've put under road test scrutiny some truly groundbreaking cars. The McLaren F1 and Bugatti Veyron come to mind. Now it's the turn of a modern-day hypercar: the electric Lotus Evija.

It's fair to say that plenty wrote off this Lotus, deeming the marque not worthy of making a car at these heady heights. If brands such as Ferrari wouldn't go near an electric hypercar, they asked, why would Lotus even dare?

I won't ruin the sheer wonder of the figures published on p28, but suffice to say the Evija has completely destroyed all of our records for acceleration beyond a certain speed, setting new standards for pace. They aren't small steps of progress forward, either, but gargantuan leaps.

It's easy to become disillusioned with the wild pace of electric hypercars today, but Lotus has proved itself against the odds here, breaking the boundaries of modern-day hypercar ability.

Developed at Lotus's home of Hethel, alongside engineering kingpins including Williams and Multimatic, the Evija thankfully demonstrates exactly why it should have been made.

Finally, as always, we are keen to hear your thoughts on Autocar, so please complete our survey, details of which can be found on p38.

Rachel Burgess, magazine editor
rachel.burgess@haymarket.com

Meanwhile, online...

autocar.co.uk

4x4 icon turns electric

A Range Rover. But not like you've seen before. Matt Saunders takes a silent, off-road drive through JLR's test facility in Eastnor.

Hyundai's most extreme car yet is here

The Ioniq 6 N is a 641bhp BMW M3 rival from Hyundai. We take a closer look at it.

Longest-range EV tested

The new CLA EQ offers 483 miles of range for £45k. It's a car Mercedes can't afford to get wrong – and we've put it to the test.

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"I've lost days of my life dreaming about asymmetrical torque vectoring" p39

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NEWS

GOT A STORY Email our news editor
will.rimell@haymarket.com

GLC EV AND iX3 TO LOCK HORNS IN NEW-ERA DUEL

Mercedes and BMW will begin vital new chapters with electric SUV rivals

BMW and Mercedes-Benz will go head to head with the new iX3 and GLC – a pair of radical electric SUVs that will kick-start crucial new eras for the two German marques.

The pair are set to headline the Munich motor show in September. The event (see overleaf) is shaping up to be Europe's biggest motor show since the Covid pandemic, with Volkswagen, Renault, Polestar and others also set to reveal crucial models.

The significance of the new iX3 and GLC cannot be understated as both car makers attempt to gain a foothold in Europe's most hotly contested new car segment in a bid to increase EV sales in the face of tightening emissions regulations.

The two SUVs also mark major milestones for BMW and Mercedes. Both introduce advanced underpinnings and designs that will be adopted across their respective brands in the coming years.

iX3 BEGINS BMW'S NEUE KLASSE AGE

Of the two, the iX3 is arguably the more radical, because it will usher in BMW's long-awaited Neue Klasse age, which includes a total reset of its design, engineering and marketing.

The second-generation electric iX3 will be sold alongside the current, fourth-generation petrol X3 and will sit on the all-new Neue Klasse architecture.

As a result, the new iX3 will have slimmer batteries, more efficient motors and clever technology that BMW claims will be a "quantum leap forward" from today's electric offerings.

The size of its nickel-manganese-cobalt pack, which features new cylindrical cells, has yet to be disclosed but BMW says the iX3 will offer a range of 497 miles – 210 miles more than the first-generation car. That would make it Britain's longest-range EV, going even farther than the new Mercedes-Benz CLA EQ saloon, which currently tops the charts at 484 miles.

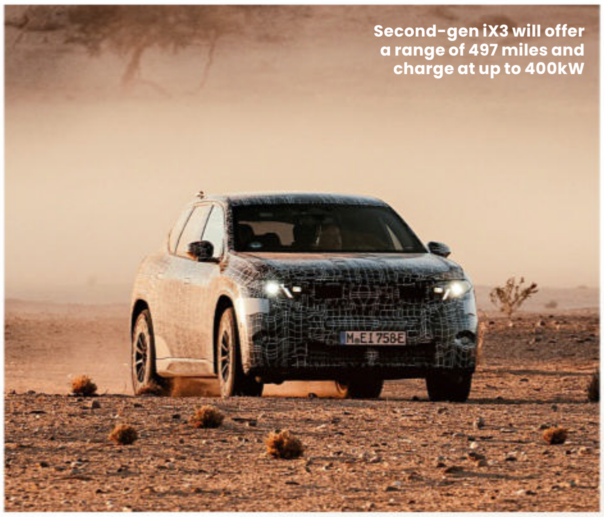
Gen6 platform's 800V electrical architecture means the SUV will also be able to charge at up to 400kW, enabling a 218-mile top-up in just 10 minutes from suitable chargers.

Two powertrains will be available when the iX3 arrives in the UK early next year: a single-motor, rear-wheel-drive one and a dual-motor, four-wheel-drive one that can deliver up to 402bhp.

The second-generation iX3 also receives a new computing system

MB26 GLC
AUTOCAR IMAGE

Electric GLC will go on sale early next year with 435-mile range



Second-gen iX3 will offer a range of 497 miles and charge at up to 400kW

that is 10 times faster than the network of chips in current BMWs.

In addition, to maximise interior space within this set-up and to keep vehicle height as low as possible to aid aerodynamics, BMW will unusually bolt the front seats directly to the pack – another first for the firm.

MERC EVs MOVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

It's a similar story at Mercedes, where the new electric GLC not only marks the company's next step in electrification but also will be the first car to embody the brand's bold new-era design language.

It will be sold alongside the current, second-generation combustion-engined GLC, which was launched in 2022.

The GLC has regularly been Mercedes' best-selling model since its introduction in 2015 and the firm hopes the new GLC EV – successor to the discontinued EQC SUV – can leverage the equity built by the GLC name and be a catalyst for Mercedes' EV sales.

Going on sale in early 2026, it will become the first model to use the Mercedes-Benz Electric Architecture (MB.EA), a dedicated electric car structure that will also form the basis of the upcoming electric C-Class.

It supports an 800V electrical architecture and has an expected maximum charging speed beyond the 320kW of the new MMA-based CLA EQ.

Mercedes officials have confirmed to Autocar that the electric GLC will draw electricity from a 94.5kWh battery, which will provide up to 435 miles of range in its most efficient form.

The electric GLC will be sold with single- and dual-motor powertrains, offering up to 482bhp in dual-motor guise. An AMG performance flagship is due in 2027 and is tipped to offer up to 600bhp.

WHAT THE RIVAL EVs WILL BRING

The iX3 and GLC will be diametrically opposed in stylistic terms, with Mercedes opting for something more progressive while BMW bets on a neo-retro look.

Like the smaller CLA, the GLC will draw heavily on Mercedes' Vision EQXX concept car in terms of aerodynamic performance and minimising the loads on the motors to maximise efficiency. For reference, the EQXX extracted 627 miles from a 100kWh battery pack last year.

As a result, this approach will yield a futuristic-looking design, with a rakish, ▶

"Both cars introduce advanced new underpinnings and fresh designs for their makers"

Electric GLC will fill the gap left by the EQC SUV (pictured)

◀ bubble-like roofline and a tall, upright front grille that has been inspired by historic models such as the ‘Ponton’, the predecessor to today’s E-Class.

According to Mercedes design chief Gorden Wagener, the ambition is to give the new model “a strong identity” in the “sea of sameness” that he perceives among today’s EVs. “Our grilles will remain a key identifier,” he said.

Meanwhile, BMW is shifting to a more classical look. As previewed by the Vision Neue Klasse X concept, it will draw on the original Neue Klasse models from the 1960s and return to small kidney grilles rather than the bolder, more expansive front ends that adorn the likes of the iX.

The double-kidney grille will divide a large, gloss black panel on the iX3’s front end – similar in style to the Vizor found on Vauxhalls. The panel is likely to conceal the sensors and cameras required by the latest generation of driver assistance systems. The rest of the car will feature a boxier, more chiselled look that today’s models, with angled lights front and rear, plus a rear light bar.

The reinvention continues inside the iX3, which will be the first car to employ BMW’s new iDrive X system. Previewed earlier this year, this comprises a large, sloped central infotainment screen, above which a head-up display spans the entire width of the dashboard. Traditional buttons are out, with BMW claiming the new set-up allows it to offer more complex and varied options, which can be updated over the air during the car’s life.

In place of buttons are toolbars and customisable widgets on the touchscreen, as well as voice control that is said to be more intuitive than today’s set-up.

The steering wheel has been redeveloped as well. Its design moves from three spokes to four but it retains haptic buttons for important functions such as cruise control.

“Our slogan is ‘eyes on the road and hands on the wheel’, which means everything has to be in a perfect situation,” Christian Bauer, BMW vice-president of user interface design, told Autocar earlier this year.

For the GLC, much of its cockpit design remains under wraps, but the new CLA hints at what to expect. That car’s dashboard is designed around the latest iteration of Mercedes’ Superscreen, which spans the width of the dashboard with three digital displays – a 10.25in screen for driving information, a 14.6in infotainment screen in the middle and a 14in screen for the front passenger.

Like the iX3, the GLC will dispense with many physical buttons and instead uses voice controls backed by artificial intelligence systems.

WILL RIMELL AND CHARLIE MARTIN

SPY SHOT

3 Series EV, currently testing, will join new iX3 in early 2026

Vision Neue Klasse X shows BMW’s new design direction

MORE STARS LINE UP FOR MUNICH MOTOR SHOW

THE MUNICH MOTOR show in September will host a raft of debuts from Polestar, Renault, Skoda, Volkswagen and others.

As well as the launches of the new BMW iX3 and electric Mercedes GLC, a key focus will be on the much-anticipated new wave of small EVs. Following the success of the Renault 5 – which has so far this year achieved more than 30,000 sales in Europe – sub-£25,000 EVs are now expected to be the most fiercely contested segment as manufacturers battle to increase their EV sales.

Making its debut at Munich, the long-awaited Volkswagen ID 2 (previewed by the pictured ID 2all concept) will be the first of the VW Group’s MEB Entry range of price-leading EVs, which also include the Cupra Raval, Skoda Epiq and raised Volkswagen ID 2 X.

According to VW brand boss Thomas Schäfer, the four vehicles, known as the Electric Urban Car Family, are crucial for the group’s stability after a turbulent period marked by planned factory closures and substantial job cuts.

The ID 2 will be unveiled in production-ready form at the show ahead of its arrival in showrooms early next year. The electric counterpart to the Polo is seen by group insiders as one of the most important cars it has launched in recent times. It is pencilled in to go on sale priced at or just below the £23,000 starting price of the 5.

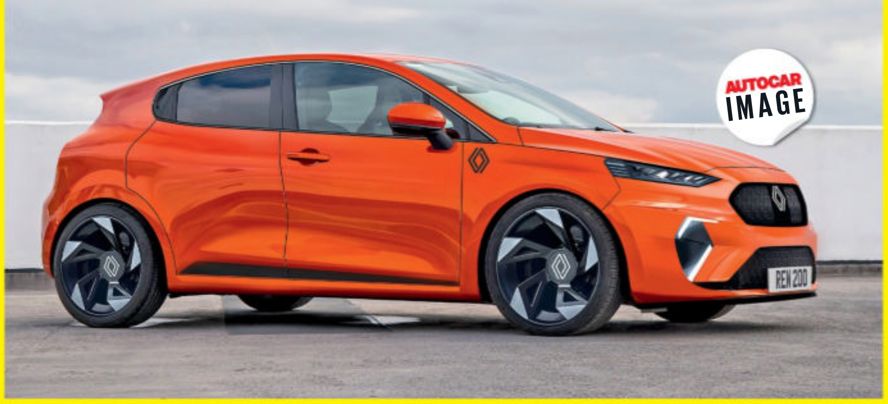
It will measure around 4.1m long, have a wheelbase of 2.6m and offer 490 litres of boot space. Inside, it will feature an array of physical switches for primary functions, alongside a 12.9in infotainment screen and 10.9in digital driver display.

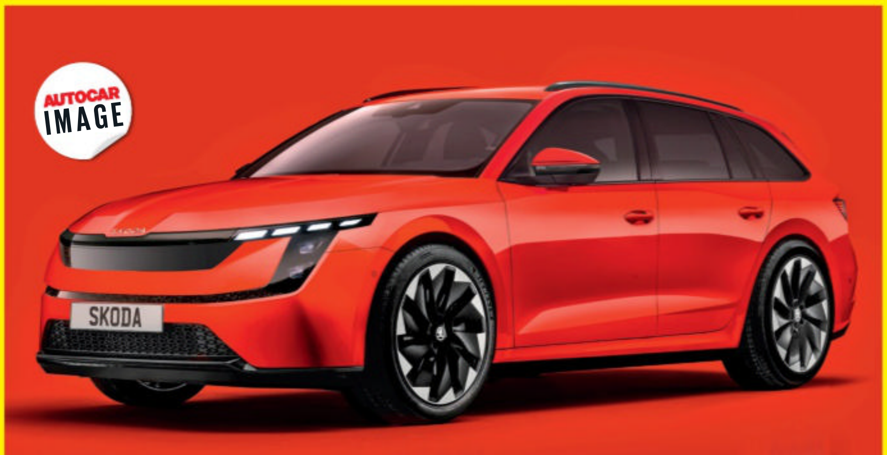
The ID 2, like its three platform siblings, will be powered exclusively by a 223bhp single front-mounted motor and a choice of 38kWh and 56kWh batteries. The bigger battery will provide a range of around 280 miles.

A hot GTI variant of the ID 2 is also in the works and has been previewed by the ID GTI concept. It will enter production in 2027.

RENAULT CLIO

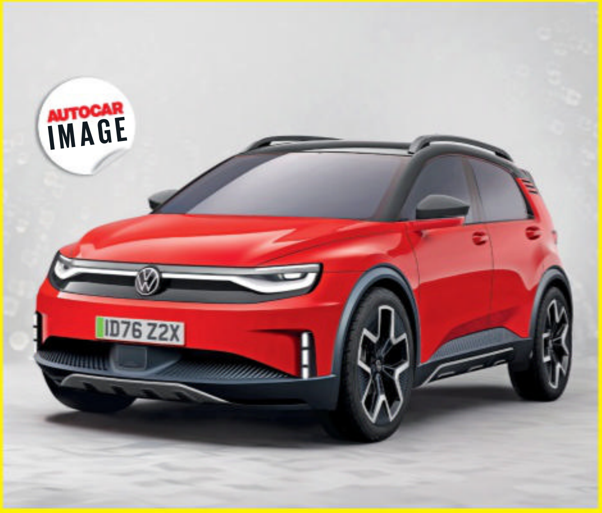
A radically different Clio will be shown for the first time. The sixth-generation hatchback is set to ditch pure-petrol engines and go hybrid-only – in part to meet stringent new EU fleet emissions targets. The supermini will also introduce several new design cues, such as a more prominent nose with a diamond-shaped grille pattern and twin-decked lip spoilers at the rear.





SKODA OCTAVIA

A new concept from Skoda will preview the next-generation Octavia Estate. CEO Klaus Zellmer told Autocar that it will be a “further step” for the brand in its design but will still “clearly be recognisable as a Skoda”. It is likely to be based on the Volkswagen Group’s upcoming SSP platform, designed for its next-generation EVs.



VOLKSWAGEN ID 2X

Beside the ID 2, the taller and chunkier ID 2X will be shown in near-production form for the first time. It will go on sale a year after the hatch. Effectively an electric alternative to the T-Cross, it will start at around £25,000, meaning it is set to be one of the cheapest electric SUVs on the market.

CUPRA RAVAL

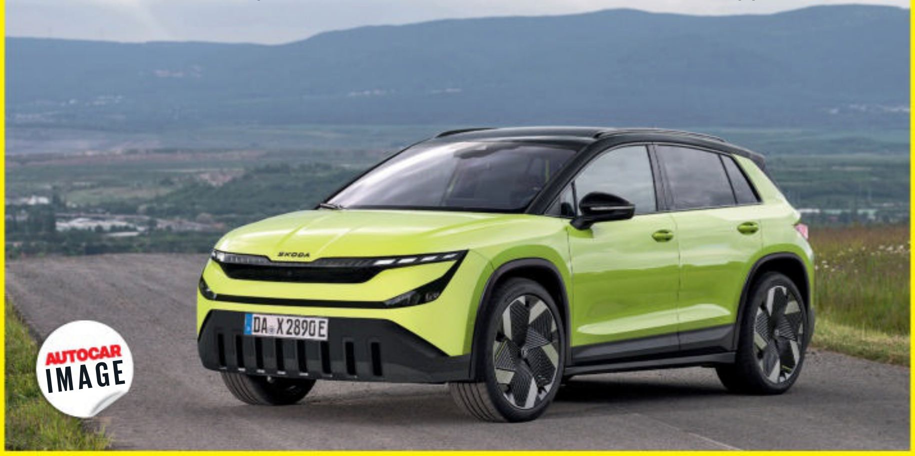
The Raval will make its production debut at the show. It will be the brand's smallest EV, sitting below the VW ID 3-twinned Born. Like that car, it will be positioned as the most sporty and "rebellious" variant of the MEB Entry range. To that end, it will feature a more aggressive-looking design than the ID 2 (as previewed by the pictured concept).

POLESTAR 5

Polestar will reveal its Porsche Taycan-rivalling 5 at the Munich show. The newcomer is promised to offer nearly 900bhp in its most potent form. The super-saloon is described as a "company-defining project" and will be the first model built on Polestar's new 800V architecture. It is said to have "supercar levels" of stiffness and be the lightest model in its class.

SKODA EPIQ

Along with its platform siblings, the Epiq is expected to be unveiled at the show. Revealed in concept form in 2024, it will go on sale next year priced at less than £25,000. Like the ID 2X, with which it will share a production line, it will be a rugged, 4x4-inspired raised hatch that will square off with the Renault 4. A hot vRS version is tipped to follow.



CUPRA CONCEPT

In addition to the Raval, Cupra will take the wraps off a new concept that is expected to showcase the next generation of its interior design. An official preview image shows a radical new cabin similar to that of the Dark Rebel concept, which was unveiled in 2023, and includes a yoke-like steering wheel, chunky central spine and racing seats.

A-CLASS THROWN A LIFELINE AMID CONTINUED DEMAND

Mercedes extends popular ICE hatchback's production cycle until 2028

A35 and A45 hot hatches won't be able to meet upcoming Euro 7 rules

Mercedes-Benz will keep the current A-Class hatchback in production until at least 2028.

The move comes despite repeated statements from CEO Ola Källenius that the popular hatchback, along with the B-Class MPV, would cease production at the end of this year, bringing to an end two generations of models based on the company's MFA platform.

Mercedes originally touted a future compact car strategy built around four new models : the CLA, CLA Shooting Brake, GLA and GLB, all based on the new MMA platform and all of which will offer a choice of combustion engine and electrified drivetrains.

However, Mercedes sources suggest those models will now be joined by an upgraded version of today's A-Class hatchback, production of which is said to have been extended by up to three years.

The move is understood to have been driven by continued demand for the seven-year-old ICE model, in combination with a slower than expected take-up of Mercedes' newer EVs.

Production of the A-Class Saloon ended earlier this year, but production of the A-Class hatchback is now expected to continue beyond the introduction of EU7 emissions regulations late next year, although it remains unclear whether existing petrol and diesel engines will be adapted to meet the new standards.

Autocar understands that the AMG A35 and A45 hot hatches will be taken off sale because their M139 2.0-litre turbocharged engine doesn't comply with EU7, although there is currently not a timeframe for when this will happen.

A-Class production is also likely to shift to Mercedes' Kecskemét plant in Hungary, because the factory in Rastatt, Germany, where it's currently made has been repurposed for production of the new CLA and CLA Shooting Brake.

The future of the B-Class remains uncertain, but Autocar understands that Mercedes intends to stick to its original plan and cease production of the BMW 2 Series Active Tourer rival at the end of this year.

The extension of the A-Class hatchback's model cycle coincides with a broader reshuffle of Mercedes' compact car line-up. The new CLA pair will go on sale before the end of this year as the EQB bows out, while production of the new GLB (in both ICE and EV forms) is set to begin by the start of next year, with the new GLA arriving a few months after that.

While no successor to the A-Class hatchback is planned on the MMA platform, its extended life reflects Mercedes' need to sustain sales of compact cars amid a broader shift toward electrification and high-margin luxury segments.

In 2019, the brand's compact car range peaked at 667,000 global sales; last year, that figure declined to 534,800.

In a statement sent to Autocar, Mercedes said: "The A-Class continues to enjoy high demand among our customers, and we are currently in the lifecycle of this vehicle. Recently, the series was updated and enhanced with an extensive facelift, making this vehicle even more desirable for our customers.

"We do not comment on phase-out dates or portfolio decisions."

GREG KABLE

"Take-up of Mercedes' newer EVs has been slower than expected"

ROWAN TAKES LOTUS ROLE

Former Volvo CEO Jim Rowan has been appointed to the board of Lotus. The Scotsman left the Swedish firm in March, replaced by his predecessor Håkan Samuelsson. Both firms are Geely-owned.

PUNCHY PRICE FOR ISUZU EV

The new Isuzu D-Max EV pick-up truck will be priced from £59,995 when it arrives next February. The Japanese brand's first EV uses a pair of motors to produce 188bhp. Claimed range tops out at 163 miles.

OFFICIAL PICTURES

SUBARU CONTINUES ELECTRIFICATION DRIVE WITH RUGGED UNCHARTED SUV

SUBARU HAS REVEALED the new Uncharted SUV as its third electric car, joining the new-look Solterra crossover and the high-riding E-Outback estate (see below).

The rugged Uncharted is based on strategic partner firm Toyota's new C-HR+ (just as the Solterra is based on the bZ4X) and will come to the UK early next year to rival the Ford Capri and Cupra Tavascan. It will sit below the Solterra in the Subaru line-up.

While its silhouette is identical to that of the C-HR+, the Uncharted boosts its off-road credentials with a raised ride height (to 210mm), chunky black body cladding and roof rails.

As a Toyota cousin, the Uncharted is offered with a choice of two batteries and front- or four-wheel-drive powertrains.

However, Subaru highlights that the Uncharted has a different suspension and steering tune than the C-HR+ for a "sporty and nimble character".

Uncharted is pitched as an off-roader but also comes in FWD form

It also has the same suite of off-road driving modes as the ICE Forester.

The entry-level Uncharted comes with a 165bhp front-mounted electric motor and a 57.7kWh battery, giving it up to 276 miles of range.

Models fitted with the larger 77kWh battery are offered in both two- and four-wheel-drive forms.

The single-motor, FWD model makes 221bhp and can travel up to 363 miles on a charge; the twin-motor 4x4 offers up to 292 miles but makes 338bhp, hits 62mph from rest in 5.0sec and can tow up to 1500kg.

The Uncharted's interior is carried over from the C-HR+, featuring a squared-off wheel, a 7.0in driver's display and a new 14in infotainment touchscreen.

The new EV will launch in the UK early next year. Pricing remains under wraps, but it's likely that the entry-level Uncharted will land at sub-£40,000.

Design and tech are borrowed from new Toyota C-HR+

E-OUTBACK TO PACK 375BHP PUNCH

Subaru has confirmed that its new high-riding electric estate will be called the E-Outback in the UK.

It was revealed earlier this year in the US, where it will be badged Trailseeker, and is Subaru's first EV developed in-house.

It will be launched first in the US in early 2026, then play a key roll in the expansion of Subaru's EV line-up in Europe, where it's due later in that year.

Based on the same platform as the Toyota-twinned Solterra and Uncharted, it uses a pair of motors for 375bhp and four-wheel drive, while a 74.7kWh battery gives it a 279-mile range.

Pricing is likely to start above that of the £52,505 Solterra.

SUBARU EYES SPORTS EVS

Subaru is considering a European return for the BRZ sports coupé in its third generation – and it could be electric.

The brand hasn't sold a performance car in Europe since the original BRZ bowed out in 2021, but Subaru Europe boss David Dello Stritto said "options are open" for new sporting models in the region, thanks to the flexibility of its EV platform.

Subaru's global EV product boss, Inoue Masahiko, also hinted that an electric version of the BRZ was "under consideration" and had been heavily looked at in the past with its long-term partner Toyota.

Subaru teased the idea of an electric sports coupé with the chunky, high-riding Sport Mobility concept in 2023 (pictured).

GWM TARGETS… FERRARI?!

GWM has previewed a shock plug-in hybrid supercar to rival the Ferrari 296 and McLaren Artura. Tipped for a debut later this year, it could be the first car to use the Chinese firm's new 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8.

NEW C5 AIRCROSS IS £30K

Citroën has priced the new C5 Aircross SUV, its flagship model, from £30,495. That gets you the 143bhp hybrid, while the 207bhp EV starts at £34,065. The two variants top out at £35,775 and £39,345 respectively.

ASIAN BRANDS REACT TO EV GRANT AS LOOPHOLES FOUND

Some offer own discounts in the wake of UK's 'discriminatory' new ECG

Car makers that look set to be denied access to the UK government's new Electric Car Grant (ECG), announced earlier this month, have launched their own equivalent discounts of up to £3750, matching the ECG's maximum saving.

Cars eligible for the ECG will be announced on 11 August, but Autocar understands only around two thirds of EVs costing less than the scheme's £37,000 limit will be eligible.

The models missing out are to be penalised for high emissions in their countries of manufacture, with brands and cars from China and South Korea – such as MG and Hyundai - among those most likely to be affected.

Likely pre-empting that their models will be denied access to the ECG, the pair have, along with some other car makers, launched their own equivalent discounts.

MG Motor UK commercial director Guy Pigounakis told Autocar this was to counter a halting of orders as buyers waited for the government's grant scheme to go live.

"Within 24 hours of the government making the announcement, order take across all brands at dealerships for electric cars under £37,000 quite literally stopped," he said.

Stellantis brand Leapmotor, another to introduce new discounts, confirmed to Autocar that it would pull its own incentive of up to £3750 if its cars were to be eligible for ECG.

Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) boss Mike Hawes said that while any support "is the right thing", the fact that it will help "some but not all OEMs" isn't ideal.

"We understand the ambition, but there is a lack of clarity," said Hawes.

He added that the automotive industry hadn't been consulted on the ECG before it was announced.

Regardless, Hawes said he believes the scheme "will be a success, as consumers respond to carrots".

DISCRIMINATION

When it was put to the government, a Department for Transport (DfT) spokesperson denied that requirements to access the ECG are discriminatory against manufacturers from certain countries or that the scheme was designed to encourage more local manufacture of electric cars.

The latter point was backed by Hawes, who said it looked to have been formulated to target "products with broader sustainability goals, not just zero tailpipe emissions".

According to The Telegraph newspaper, China has already said the ECG violates World Trade Organization rules about creating a "non-discriminatory" trading environment.

> **"China has said the ECG violates World Trade Organization rules"**

BU74 XJJ
BC74 HFW

EVs built in China are likely to miss out on ECG eligibility

SMMT's Hawes says ECG scheme "lacks clarity"

It is understood that politicians from other countries whose EVs have been excluded have also written to the government or plan to do so.

"All manufacturers are treated equally," said the DfT spokesperson. "If a manufacturer feels that their local electricity arrangements mean their manufacturing is greener than the baseline data, they can request a review to have their scoring altered.

"The government is confident the scheme is in keeping with its international obligations.

We will continue to work with our partners internationally to support the zero-emission vehicle transition."

LOOPHOLES

Autocar has also been made aware that within the scheme lies a number of notable exploitable loopholes, which it brought to the attention of the government.

One such example is that car makers will be able to get the ECG paid to themselves by registering the likes of demonstrators and staff vehicles.

At face value, the loophole undermines at the very least the spirit of the ECG, which is ostensibly being introduced with the goal of boosting sales of EVs to private buyers.

Hawes said the scheme will be "monitored by the government to ensure it flows through" to the right places, and the DfT spokesperson confirmed the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles must be told in each instance. The spokesperson added that unlike car makers, dealers won't be able to pre-register EVs and receive the ECG.

Another issue that has been highlighted is that the grant offers public money to fleet buyers and company car drivers who don't need any extra encouragement or incentive to switch to an EV. This point was rejected by the government.

While subsidies are often called for to boost private EV sales (which are only one-fifth of the market) to meet ZEV mandate targets, fleet EV sales, already incentivised by benefit-in-kind tax breaks, have driven most market growth to date. However, the ECG is available to both private and fleet buyers, so it could mean public funds are used for purchases that fleet drivers would likely make regardless.

"The government is committed to supporting all consumers," said the DfT spokesperson.

On the same point, Hawes said the objective of the government "is to get EVs on the road, and that includes fleet, rightly or wrongly".

It has also emerged that the ECG has no minimum retention period after a customer has taken delivery of the car, which potentially allows them to flip the discounted car for a profit.

The government considers this "unlikely" but said: "Should this kind of behaviour materialise, the government would act swiftly to prevent it."

While no changes are expected to the scheme in the short term, the DfT spokesperson said the ECG will be kept under review and "evolve as the market does". They added that the government welcomed feedback from car makers as part of this.

MARK TISSHAW

THE DISCOUNTS

Alfa Romeo
Discount £1500
Price after Junior Elettrica: £32,405

GWM
Discount £3750
Price after Ora 03: £21,245

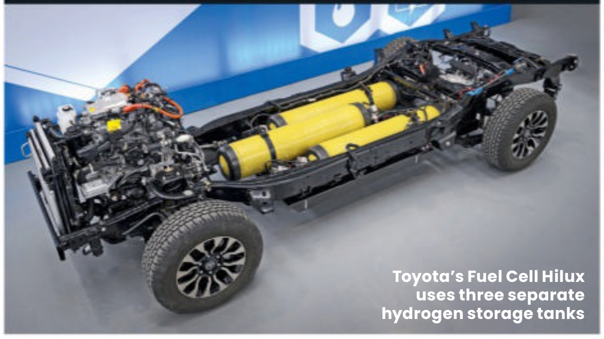
Hyundai
Discount £1500/£3750
Prices after Inster: £19,755; Kona Electric £33,500

Leapmotor
Discount £1500/£3750
Prices after T03: £14,495; C10: £32,750

MG
Discount £1500
Prices after 4 EV: £25,495; S5 EV: £26,995

Next big thing

JESSE CROSSE


Toyota's Fuel Cell Hilux uses three separate hydrogen storage tanks

HYDROGEN MAKES HEADWAY IN ALTERNATIVE-FUEL FUTURE

ONE OF THE great things about the Goodwood Festival of Speed is that while the focus is on awesome cars from all levels and eras of road, track and rally stage, there's a healthy presence of future technology on display too.

Several manufacturers of both road cars and commercial vehicles are maintaining healthy hydrogen development programmes of both fuel cells and hydrogen combustion engines.

Toyota has programmes for both ICE and fuel cells as part of its 'multi-pathway' route to carbon neutrality, with projects covering racing, rallying and light commercial vehicles. It's also pursuing hydrogen storage methods, with both compressed gas and liquid hydrogen. Two projects appeared at Goodwood. The new GR010 Hybrid WEC car-based GR LH2 Racing Concept, unveiled at Le Mans in June, was on static display, with its hydrogen-fuelled ICE, while the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Hilux prototype was in action as a support vehicle.

Ten prototype pick-ups were built at Toyota's UK's Burnaston plant, with five retained for testing and the rest used for demo activities. Each has a 373-mile range, fuelled by compressed hydrogen in three pressure vessels.

Hydrogen capacity is measured by weight, and each vessel contains 2.6kg, giving a total of 7.8kg. Compared with other zero-emission options, (such as an EV battery pack), that's not much, and it means the Hilux has a high payload and towing capability.

The fuel-cell system uses the main elements of Toyota's Mirai FCEV saloon, with a polymer electrolyte membrane-type fuel-cell stack (also known as the Proton Exchange Membrane or PEM) made up of 330 fuel cells. The stack is mounted over the front axle, with drive sent to a 180bhp, 221lb ft electric motor-generator on the rear axle. A small lithium ion battery in the rear load deck acts as a buffer between stack and motor to deliver the transient bursts of energy for acceleration and store harvested energy from regenerative braking.

The hydrogen ICE programme emerged in racing form with a Corolla Sport powered by a three-cylinder GR-Yaris engine converted initially to run on compressed hydrogen.

A further step in 2024 used 'boil-off gas' from the liquid hydrogen: the fuel is stored at -253deg C and literally boils off as it warms up, despite being stored in a vacuum tank. The gas then enters a self-pressuriser before being fed to the engine, instead of being vented to the atmosphere and wasted.

The GR LH2 racer is also fuelled by liquid hydrogen and will undergo future track testing.

The GR Yaris H2 rally car made its debut at Rally Finland in 2022, and the GR Rally2 H2 Concept was again demonstrated in Finland at the end of July.

Hydrogen-fuelled Hilux has a 373-mile range

TREND-BUSTING PRICE HIKE FOR SELECT USED DIESELS

Diesel may be on the way out, but not all models are falling in price

The values of some used diesel cars are actually increasing despite the fading appeal of the powertrain in the new car market, say leading vehicle valuation experts.

In the first half of 2025, just 58,722 new diesels were registered, down 11.3% on 2024. This continues a decline that can be traced to 2017, amid the fallout from the Dieselgate scandal and concerns about future vehicle taxation and emissions penalties.

Diesel's days appear numbered. Only a few car makers still produce diesel models – among them Audi, BMW and JLR – and other types, such as petrol, hybrid and battery-electric vehicles, are experiencing rising demand.

For most diesel models, this is reflected in increased rates of depreciation, but, bucking this trend, some have actually increased in value over what they were worth a year ago.

> **"Fuel economy is still a significant factor for high-mileage drivers"**

For example, according to Cap HPI, a three-year-old diesel Honda HR-V with 60,000 miles is worth 11.3% more today than the same model was at the same point last year. In addition, the value of an equivalent Mercedes CLS has risen 8% and a Ford Mondeo 6.5%.

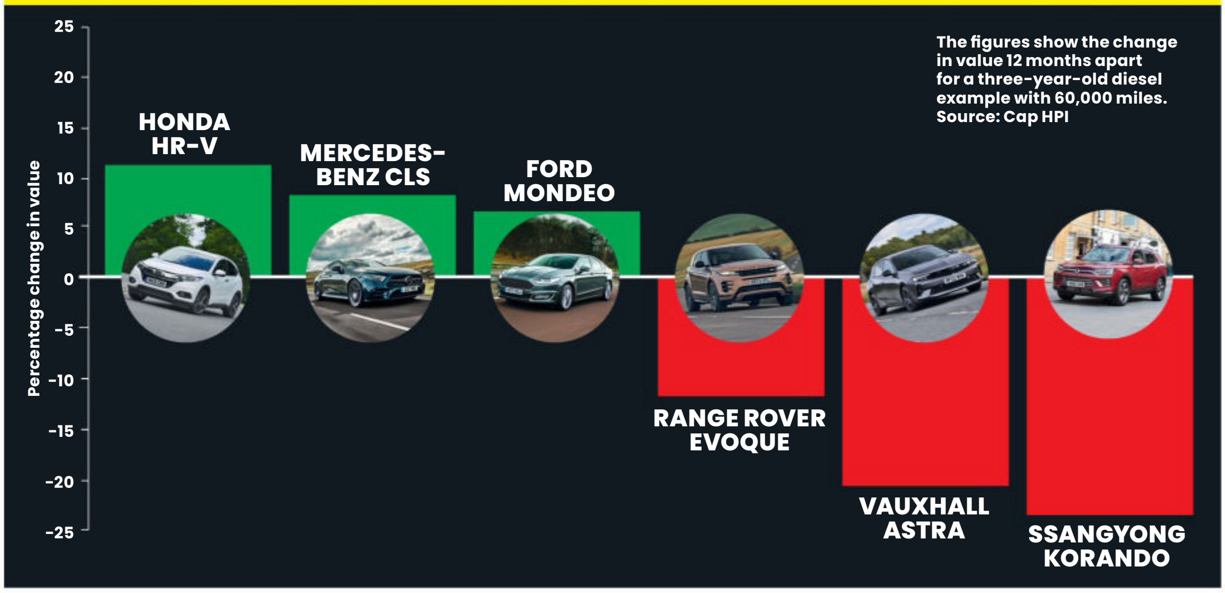
Explaining the figures, Dylan Setterfield, head of forecast strategy at Cap HPI, said: "There is still demand for diesel in the used market from both consumers and dealers, with fuel economy continuing to be a significant factor for high-mileage drivers.

"New [diesel] car volumes have been decreasing for some time, and this is translating into reduced used car volumes. We expect these reductions to be partially offset by the ongoing reduction in consumer demand and that prices will behave similarly to petrol [car prices] in the next few years."

However, the market is experiencing wild valuation extremes and some models are instead depreciating at higher than expected rates compared with what they were worth last year.

Those suffering the biggest falls in value include

USED DIESEL CAR VALUES: THE BIGGEST WINNERS AND LOSERS



The figures show the change in value 12 months apart for a three-year-old diesel example with 60,000 miles. Source: Cap HPI

the Ssangyong Korando 2.2D, with a three-year-old example with 60,000 miles worth 24.5% less. An equivalent Vauxhall Astra is down 20.2% in value and a Range Rover Evoque down 12.7%. These losses are atop the models' regular year-on-year depreciation.

Setterfield said: "The Korando's falls seem to have been caused by uncertainty and confusion in the marketplace as the brand transitioned from Ssangyong to KGM. Astra diesels with above-average mileage are now suffering increased penalties, while the Evoque's figure can be explained by an increase in used volumes following a shortage of supply."

Consumers unsure about buying a diesel are unlikely to be reassured by these wild extremes. Fortunately, these cars aside, the bulk of the sector is actually quite stable, with the average three-year-old diesel worth just 2.1% less than its equivalent 12 months ago. The equivalent figure for a petrol car is 1.3% less. At 12 months and 20,000 miles, their positions are reversed, with the diesel worth 1.4% less and the petrol 1.6% less.

Philip Nothard, insight director at Cox Automotive International, a vehicle auction and remarketing company, welcomed the return of stability to most areas of the diesel market.

He said: "After the highs of the immediate post-Covid years, when even two- to four-year-old diesels were worth 73% of their new price and ones less than a year old 98%, order is returning to the market. In 2023, diesel values fell at a steeper rate than petrol as sentiment shifted to the latter and, thanks to tax changes, to some extent also to EVs.

"The fall in the sales of new diesels that year means that today, there are only 155,000 three-year-old diesels on the road. Values are sliding but just about holding firm, with two- to four-year-old diesels currently worth around 51% of their new price compared with petrol cars at 58%. Electric cars are worth around 36%."

The shortage of used diesels and the stability of their values are reflected on dealer forecourts. Motorpoint is a leading car supermarket and typically stocks around 5000 cars, most no older than four years. Currently, only around 350 of them are diesels and diesel hybrids. They include a 2023 Audi A4 35 TDI S Line S Tronic with 14,500 miles for £22,699 and a 2022 Ford Kuga 1.5 Ecoblue ST-Line X with 17,000 miles for £19,999.

Motorpoint Group CEO Mark Carpenter believes that although demand for diesels has fallen considerably, the declining number of new ones being produced means that used examples will soon be the only ones readily available to customers.

However, he doesn't expect that any future increase in demand for them will necessarily trigger a steep rise in their prices.

He said: "While any uplift in demand for used diesel vehicles will have some impact on prices, with fewer new diesel cars on the road, used diesel stock will continue to get older, reducing its appeal for motorists wanting a nearly new car."

JOHN EVANS

DIESEL'S FUTURE: THE 1940 VERSION

Since Dieselgate broke in 2015, diesel has had a dark cloud hanging over it. But back in the mid-20th century it was seen as the future of passenger car power. Scan the QR code to read our predictions for the powertrain in 1940.*

JLR is one of the diminishing number of firms still making diesels

Grapevine

MARK TISSHAW

Ashley Andrew leads Genesis and Hyundai in the UK

THE SURGE IN growth this century of the Hyundai Motor Group (HMG) means it is now the world's third largest car maker, behind only Toyota and the Volkswagen Group.

The third brand in HMG alongside Hyundai and Kia is premium newcomer Genesis, and "there is unwavering belief [within HMG] that it will be very successful," says Ashley Andrew, Genesis UK managing director. "Then you're just discussing the when and the how."

Strong stuff, yet as the likes of Infiniti, DS and probably even Lexus will testify, launching a premium brand is about as tough a test as you can get in today's car industry, particularly in Europe.

There is no modern precedent for a new premium brand consistently challenging the likes of Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz here, despite the proliferation of new brands in that time.

It's just over four years since Genesis's UK launch. Its strategy has since changed so significantly that it has effectively relaunched. It has gone from a direct sales model and a handful of 'Spaces' in shopping centres to plans to create 12 physical sites with retail partners. Seven are already up and running.

These are shared sites with Hyundai, with which Genesis's back-end UK operations were merged in late 2023, although there is a "solid wall" between the brands. Any sites on top of these dozen are expected to be standalone Genesis showrooms.

Andrew, who also leads Hyundai in the UK, says the back-end merger gets Genesis in front of fleet buyers as part of conversations with Hyundai, and the showrooms get the brand's cars in front of private buyers for the first time in a traditional way.

Still, Genesis has sold fewer than 1000 cars in the UK so far this year. But big-name retailers including Arnold Clark and Pendragon have invested in Genesis showrooms and Andrew says they have done so because these "investors understand Hyundai and know that the group succeeds with whatever they set out to do".

For Genesis, Andrew says defining 'success' remains about "market awareness" and ensuring that every customer gets exceptional service as part of its philosophy of 'son-nim' – Korean for 'honoured guest'. "It's not about scale; it's protecting that bespoke service as that's how we differentiate ourselves," he says.

Even so, having more Genesis cars on the road is clearly desirable for many reasons, among them the belief that "customers are the best advocates".

France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands will soon get Genesis cars for the first time, joining the UK, Germany and Switzerland in Europe. And just in case Genesis wasn't being ambitious enough, it's planning both a works entry at Le Mans next year and the launch of a performance sub-brand, Magma.

> **"There is unwavering belief in the group that Genesis will be very successful"**

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*Free for three weeks after publication date

UK KEY TO CADILLAC'S EUROPEAN AMBITIONS

On sale here 'soon', CEO confirms, with more GM brands to follow

The boss of General Motors Europe has said the UK is a key market for the American manufacturer's continental ambitions, and it will finally bring Cadillac models here "soon" – with more brands promised to follow.

GM established its new European arm in Zurich in 2021, with a plan to bring an all-electric line-up of cars to market. So far that has materialised to just the €79,000 (£68,487) Lyriq SUV, which arrived in 2023 and is currently sold only in Switzerland, France, Sweden and Germany.

In the UK, GM's presence amounts to the Chevrolet Corvette Stingray, E-Ray, and ZR1, but CEO Pere Brugal, speaking to Autocar for the first time since taking the helm, said it won't be long before the Lyriq will arrive here, given that right-hand-drive production cars were completing final testing in Ireland.

He added: "We have a plan for these to come. It is one of the [markets] that we're focusing on right now. It's coming close."

When the Lyriq does arrive, it will be joined by another model, said Brugal, because GM wants to arrive in the UK with more than just one mainstream offering.

"We want to make sure we launch not only with one model portfolio," he told Autocar at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. "We want to make sure we launch with at least a two-model portfolio."

CEO Brugal wants UK launch with at least two models

Brugal wouldn't confirm what the second car could be, but it is likely to be the Optiq luxury SUV. That is due on sale early next year, suggesting that Cadillac's UK return could coincide with its launch.

> **"Each brand will have a separate retail strategy"**

Following this, Brugal said, the plan is to bring even more models to the UK market. Asked if the likes of the Chevrolet Equinox and Blazer were part of the plan, he replied:"We have a lot of close relations and collaboration with our headquarters in Detroit. That's where we discuss what are the global trends, what do customers want, and then also what are the region-specific needs.

"We look at our links from a global perspective, and then we decide which are the programmes that we're going to bring to Europe."

Each brand will have a separate retail strategy, he said, and not be grouped under one GM umbrella – like JLR, for example.

"We don't envisage a future where we're going to be mixing Cadillac with Corvette," he said. "Corvette has its own DNA, and it's going to be staying as a standalone brand. Cadillac has its own entity as well."

As such, they will be sold in different ways. While Corvette will continue to be sold via dealer partners such as Arnold Clark, Cadillac will instead use an online-based agency model supported by "experience" pop-up stores.

Brugal said: "We have two business models for Cadillac. One is a traditional distributor model, that's the one we will use for the smaller markets, such as Ireland or Norway. But when we think about the big, big markets in Europe, we are going with a D2C [direct-to-customer model]."

Asked why he decided not to use a traditional dealer model, Brugal said: "Our D2C is focused on creating impact and explaining who we are as a brand and making sure that people understand the brand and explore the car."

He added that aftersales will be provided by partners.

WILL RIMELL

GM PONDERS MADE-FOR-EUROPE MODELS

2019 Chevrolet Monza saloon was created especially for China

Europe could get its own bespoke GM model, European boss Pere Brugal told Autocar.

The possibility is being considered given the different wants and expectations from buyers in different markets.

Brugal said: "We craft cars that we don't have in the US, but we have them in other markets. We have cars that are specific for the South America region, and we can have cars that are more of an Asia or China portfolio.

"Not all of them are available in the US, and not everything which is available in the US is available for Chinese customers or European customers.

"In the future, can it be that [we create a] car that is [just] for Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan or Korea? Maybe it can be."

MY WEEK IN CARS

Steve Cropley

This Escort is worth more than the new Lambo on p20. Yes, really

MONDAY

Here's a motor we all should have bought: this 1976 Ford Escort RS 1800, priced at a bit over £3000 when new, has just sold at a Historics auction in Berkshire for £279,000. Apparently this was Ford's second press car (the first was "crashed beyond redemption") and the price was driven to such heights by what witnesses describe as "a frenzied bidding tussle".

The car is a prime and unmolested example: twice restored, never raced or rallied, with its odometer showing 25,000 miles. However, such sales do set you to wondering which of today's cars will go on a run like that. My money (for obvious reasons) is on the Code Orange Ford Ranger Raptor, although I fear I won't be around for the half-century it has taken this Escort to make its owner's fortune.

Back in 1976, I drove an RS 1800 press car, possibly this very one, while on holiday in the UK from Australia. It was one half of a comparison being carried out by journalist friends against an Opel Kadett GTE, which, despite the Ford's better engine and far greater cachet, I slightly preferred. The price of such a Kadett today? South of £30,000, I'll bet.

Formative Car mag boss Ian Fraser, here in his own Lancia Stratos

> "I see it as slightly depressing rather than catastrophic"

TUESDAY

Slightly depressing news from the AA (whose used car info I trust) to the effect that the second-hand prices of hybrids and EVs still seem to be falling rather fast, despite some revival of interest from buyers. It seems said purchasers have heard about the EV decline and only want bargains. I see the falls as slightly depressing rather than catastrophic because declines in the prices of healthy cars are always good news for their next owners.

One interesting effect is that the annual price fall of a prime BMW i3 – the quirky carbonfibre supermini now just starting to attain venerability despite still-brilliant styling – is around half that of a Nissan Leaf (11% against 19%). This supports the recent comment of the boss of my local BMW dealership, with whom I shared a recent coffee, that i3s are gently increasing in desirability. I've always regretted not owning one, but prime examples are now hard to find and keenly sought.

WEDNESDAY

Deeply sorry to hear of the death of Ian Fraser, distinguished former editor and publisher of Car magazine and my first employer in this country. From the 1970s onward, Fraser and his coterie brought new standards of journalism and photography to the world's motoring press, determining that their job was to work for the reader, rather than to protect industry 'friends'.

What they did has made everyone better, including us at Autocar, and that influence continues today. Fraser was a brilliant writer, an extremely creative publisher, a lifelong car lover, a promoter of reader power and a top bloke. RIP.

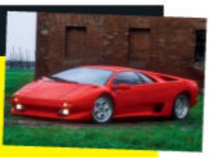
THURSDAY

Interesting sidelight on regenerative braking in battery vehicles: my BMW CE 04 electric scooter had to return to the dealership recently. The twist grip is supposed to have two modes: open it and you get power; close it and you get regenerative braking. Except the regen facility suddenly turned itself off.

I rode the bike to the dealership, where repairs were made. The interesting thing to me about that outward journey was the powerful effect on the bike's total range contributed by regen. Normally on this 22-mile, 44-minute trip, the Bee-Em's remaining range is 54 miles or close to it. This time it was 44 miles, which suggests I missed out on 10 miles' worth of energy recovered on downslopes or given away during friction braking.

That's quite a lot to concede on a short journey. It's good to have it working again.

AND ANOTHER THING



While surveying the stratospheric price rise of the Escort above, my eye was also drawn to the price trajectory of an 8500-mile 1994 Lamborghini Diablo VT that Historics, the same auctioneers, sold in 2017 for £137,000. Last week, after another tussle, the selling price was £265,408. Makes the vendor's eight years of ownership well worthwhile, even if they didn't drive it much.

GET IN TOUCH
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PRIOR CONVICTION

Matt Prior

Searching Autocar's online archive for 'DS8' just now didn't bring up the latest posh Stellantis model as I'd hoped. (That would have taken the more accurate 'N°8'). Instead it pulled up a story about the Maybach DS8 Zeppelin, a German-made, V12-engined luxury car from the 1930s.

Obviously, because I'm on a deadline and I'd already spent some time on the Morgan configurator this morning, I read the story, plus the one after it about racing driver Rod Millen's four-wheel-drive Mazda RX-7 (perhaps more on that another time).

Vying with the 'Grosser' Mercedes-Benz 770K to be Germany's most prestigious car of the time, the DS8 was vast, opulent, extraordinarily expensive and so heavy that in Germany its drivers needed a bus licence (although because most DS8s were chauffeur-driven, this was less onerous than one might think).

Aside from numerous business tycoons, owners included royalty, emperors and presidents, admirals and ambassadors. Neville Chamberlain was driven in one when he visited Germany in 1938 to meet Adolf Hitler.

In all, 340 examples were made. In the 1983 story I stumbled across, we reported that only 25 still survived. The last time I can find one being auctioned was in 2015, an elegant convertible formerly owned by a maharaja.

But back to the brand I was searching for, and I wonder how many more examples of the DS 9 (the big, plug-in hybrid executive saloon) found their way from the Chinese factory to customers in Europe than Zeppelins were ever sold here.

Last week, my friend Andrew English wrote in his Telegraph review of the new N°8 that just nine 9s found UK buyers last year. He concluded, not unreasonably, that he would seriously question the sanity of anyone who bought the new N°8.

The 9 absolutely bombed, so what makes DS think the N°8 (pictured) won't too?

To that, I might add questioning the wisdom of making it: a car for French politicians, yes, but who else?

We've repeatedly seen a phrase associated with big Citroën and DS models. In our early reviews of the 9, the company's people said that success would be measured by selling the car "in hundreds", rather than thousands, which is almost to the word what they said about the C6 back in 2006.

It is too early to gauge the sales success of the N°8 (European-built this time), but if DS does end up selling it by the several hundred per year here, my flabber will be fairly well gasted.

What do you do, then, if you're a mainstream car maker who would like to sell premium cars? And it's understandable that you really would like to, because while the volumes are lower, the profits are much higher.

I recently asked a car designer (who would prefer not to be quoted directly, so I will paraphrase) about what one should do with DS. The first thing to decide, he thought, is what DS should be. Should it be, as it was in the 1950s, a technology leader? Or ought it do something more prosaic and rerelease some of the old tunes, a new DS in the fashion of a new Mini or a new Fiat 500 (as I think it should)? He said he thought it probably ought to be true to its roots, acting as a tech leader, receiving or introducing the latest stuff that might (or perhaps might not) filter through to other Stellantis models later.

> **"He would seriously question the sanity of anyone buying it"**

There's a nobility to that, but I'm not sure that the N°8 does it. The first thing DS's website calls it is an "electric SUV", which I suppose may be so it pops up as high as possible in the search engine rankings. (If so, that hasn't worked: I'm on page seven of my search results for 'new electric SUV' and I've been past Rivian and Mahindra with still no sign of DS.)

Click the right link and you're told that you can "experience the pleasure of driving electric, with the simplicity of petrol", I think because the N°8 has a long range. But it's a sentence that could have been written for any of a dozen manufacturers.

People don't care about brands, but they will remember certain traits. Mercedes eventually took control of Maybach, and while nobody alive will remember Maybach's roots, Mercedes first reintroduced the badge for a super-opulent stand-alone model and uses it today on its range-toppers. If you've heard of it at all, you will know that it stands for something.

So could DS. But we need to be reminded of it soon, before we all forget.

GET IN TOUCH
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Maybach was famed for 'repräsentationswagen' like this magnificent DS8

RACING LINES

Damien Smith

Solberg (right) celebrates a shock first WRC win with co-driver Edmondson

The tears flowed as Oliver Solberg struggled to take in what he had just pulled off. The 23-year-old Swede, who is the son of 2003 World Rally Champion Petter Solberg, hadn't driven a top-line Rally1 car for two and a half years. Yet here he was, a dominant and utterly convincing first-time WRC winner on Rally Estonia after a late call-up to the factory Toyota Gazoo team. No wonder this was an emotional overload.

Solberg's main task this year is to win the secondary WRC2 class in a GR Yaris, but with part-timer Sébastien Ogier absent for this fast gravel event, opportunity came a-knocking. Just two days of testing was all the preparation that was available, yet there was Solberg on Friday morning claiming his first WRC stage victory. Already the tears began to well.

"I'm getting emotional," he said. "I'm not here to win. It's a dream come true."

ECSTATIC DISBELIEF

No one within Toyota could have expected such form to be maintained. Solberg's previous best in the top tier was a fourth place, in his single year with the factory Hyundai team in 2022. Yet he and British co-driver Elliott Edmondson claimed a further eight stage wins in Estonia and two days later clinched a stunning first WRC victory by a gaping 25sec over home hero Ott Tänak.

Talk about taking your chances when they land. This was supposedly a one-off appearance. Surely now it won't be, given how this pairing smashed what amounted to an audition for 2026.

"It has been the most amazing weekend," Solberg gushed. "I'm feeling so overwhelmingly happy, after so many years of dreaming and working for this moment."

> "I'm not here to win. I've never had such a good time in my life"

Along with the whole Toyota team, Solberg singled out deputy team principal and four-time champion Juha Kankkunen for special thanks: "I never thought I'd get to celebrate on a podium with Juha, who has been a hero of mine since I was a kid and one I've been looking up to together with my father. Now this weekend he has been supporting me so well, keeping me calm and telling me what to do. I've never had such a good time in my life."

Lovely moment, lovely story and a great and happy surprise for the WRC.

SILVER-LINED LOSS

As Solberg celebrated, Elfyn Evans was left to contemplate a lost points lead after finishing a lacklustre sixth in his GR Yaris. Sadly, this wasn't a surprise: he has been struggling for pace for months as the first-on-the-road 'sweeper'. After two wins from the first three rallies, he looked helpless to maintain his once-healthy advantage and has now been knocked off the top by Tänak.

However, the 2019 champion is only a single point ahead of Evans, and it means the Hyundai driver will now carry the 'sweeper' disadvantage as the WRC heads this week to one of its crown jewels, Rally Finland. Evans is a two-time winner on the brilliantly fast Finnish forest stages, and now would be a great time to dig deep, secure a hat-trick and revive his bid for a first WRC title.

Brown deserves credit for bringing colour back to McLaren

BUILDING AN EMPIRE

Zak Brown has always modelled his iteration of McLaren Racing on the original all-embracing approach of Bruce McLaren, rather than the Formula 1-centric version ruled by Ron Dennis. In recent years, McLaren has expanded into Formula E, Extreme E (briefly) and the World Endurance Championship's GT3 class, and next it will add a WEC Hypercar to the roster. But as a proud American, Brown has always naturally been drawn to his first racing love: Indycar.

Reviving a presence in the US-based series was an early priority, and although he has yet to add to McLaren's three Indianapolis 500 wins (Penske-run Mark Donohue in 1972, Johnny Rutherford in '74 and '76), Brown can at least relish the satisfaction of seeing papaya-coloured single-seaters shine on three major fronts.

As Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris carve up F1 between them after McLaren's wasted years in the wilderness, young Brit Taylor Barnard has broken through as a fresh talent to be reckoned with in Formula E and Pato O'Ward has led the line in Indycar with a fine run of form this summer. After two wins in three races, the Mexican had at least kept a glimmer of his title hopes alive, although after victory in the Toronto street race, the gap to Chip Ganassi's runaway leader Álex Palou was still a hefty 99 points.

Indycar will have raced at Laguna Seca by the time you read this, so the picture will have shifted again. Whatever the score, it seems the sun never sets on Brown's global empire building. Bruce would surely approve.

GETTY IMAGES

YOUR VIEWS

WRITE TO autocar@haymarket.com

LOTS OF TROUBLE…

It's intriguing but not surprising that Lotus is in a mess (News, 9 July).

Like Jaguar, both companies have gone full throttle for overpriced electric cars that the buying public in many countries have yet to be fully convinced by, being asked to pay more than £100k for oversized electric saloons (British buyers have long since moved away from saloons; how many S-Classes are sold these days?) and an enormous SUV too big for European roads.

No one in their right mind believes that either the Lotus or Jaguar brands are worth £120k of someone's hard-earned money for their run-of-the-mill offerings.

Second, Lotus doesn't have the first idea what customer service means. In my experience, minor repairs took months to be agreed under warranty and dealerships are few and far between. Having a flash showroom on Piccadilly with no service back-up is a sick joke, which was what led me to cancel my Emira order. I've given up with the Lotus service centres for my four-year-old Elise in favour of using a trusted local garage. My R8 has been going to Audi for 13 years.

I wish Jaguar and Lotus luck (I own an E-Type too), but I think they're both doomed. It's very, very sad, but Lotus for one had useless, deaf management. I've called Lotus's customer service several times but no one cares or listens, so why would I spend my money there?

Just look at MG thriving: cheap motors that are offering the choice of both petrol and electric and I assume with reasonable back-up.

David Michaels
North London

SPENDING PRIORITIES

Without getting into the war between those who like EVs and those who don't, the government is going to give up to £3750 to people who can afford a new car so that they stop paying fuel duty, but the government has no money and is trying to claw it back by cutting how much they pay the old and the sick.

If we are to believe that the government has no money, it needs to stop spending on unnecessary vanity projects.

Nobody is going to rush out and buy a new car just because the government is offering a subsidy that will mean lower discounts and less competitive finance deals.

Mick Phillips
Via Facebook

Letter of the week

BY NAME AND BY NATURE

I'm excited to hear that Matt Prior is about to take delivery of a Morgan Super 3 as a long-termer, with the aim of pressing it into service as a daily driver.

I first had the pleasure of driving a Super 3 during a tour of the Morgan factory two years ago and thoroughly enjoyed both the tour (even Mrs Atkinson enjoyed it) and the subsequent one-hour experience.

It has always been a car that has fascinated me, so when I recently discovered that I could hire a Super 3 for a day from Melvyn Rutter Morgan, I jumped at the chance and duly found myself setting off from the Bishop's Stortford dealership on a beautiful summer's day.

To say I had one of the best days behind a wheel of a car wouldn't be an overstatement: it delivered a fantastic and unique driving experience while seeming to thrill everyone who saw it. I have never driven a car that has attracted so much goodwill, smiles and waves. It was genuinely hard to return it to the dealership.

I have since been plotting to put one in my garage and hope that your experiences in your long-termer may give me all the justification I need to explain to Mrs Atkinson that you can live with a Super 3 as a daily. I'm looking forward to a favourable write-up!

Neil Atkinson, via email

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The introduction of the new Electric Car Grant seems rushed. The government could have done it after the new Nissan Leaf had been launched and included cars that have a certain UK content – say, 20% – to include manufacturers that are investing in UK electric vehicle manufacturing, such as Ford.

This would offer an incentive for manufacturers such as Mini to accelerate the production of electric cars in the UK. MG is considering a European plant, and this would have been another good incentive to bring the brand back to the UK. It would have put a turbocharger on Stellantis's Ellesmere Port factory, encouraging increased production. And Toyota's Burnaston factory would suddenly have been a more favourable site for future electric car production too.

A real missed opportunity.

Kowalski
Via autocar.co.uk

Lotus dealership has glitz, glamour – and cars few people can afford to buy

Kate has bagged a luxury bargain

Carl reckons most people don't know what this is

POLITICAL FOLLY

In its wisdom, the government has decided to spend millions of taxpayers' money to make EVs cheaper while also bankrolling the installation of new charging points.

What justification is there for using your money and mine to help someone buy an EV?

This just represents a windfall to the small fraction who were probably going to buy one anyway.

A similar scheme was concluded by the previous government in 2022, when EV sales were supposedly on the up. This is pure market manipulation, which didn't work in the past, but no one in government seems to have learned that lesson.

And what will this do to the already high levels of depreciation on EVs in the second-hand market?

For a government that is supposedly short of money for the more important things we all need, this decision is surely misguided.

Colin Hunt
Via email

HALF-PRICE GENESIS

After reading Steve Cropley's informed and erudite appraisal of his Genesis Electrified G80 long-term test car (2 July), I felt compelled to purchase my own dual-motor, long-wheelbase luxury car. Only one problem: my budget runs to less than £40,000 and not the £80,000 required to purchase this impressive upmarket Hyundai.

Anyway, in this respect, I think I've done rather well. My 25-plate car arrived looking resplendent with just 12 delivery miles under her 20in diamond-turned alloys.

What did she come with as standard? Well, 400bhp and more than 500lb ft of twist for effortless progress and a 0-60mph time of 4.5sec, all wrapped up in a gorgeous, 96%-aluminium body. Add to this superb handling prowess, a head-up display, an excellent stereo, a panoramic roof and 18-way, heated and cooled seats finished in supple hide to complete a beautifully finished cabin.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Jaguar I-Pace HSE – a superb, multi-award-winning driver's car with all the bells and whistles that was created by design legend Ian Callum and handles like a dream.

There are just a few remaining, so buy one while you can.

Kate Miles
Via email

TIMELESS APPEAL

I think the success of the Fiat 500, the Mini and the new small Renaults (4 and 5) has very little to do with 'retro' styling. It's surely more to do with good styling and, just as importantly, good outward visibility.

People just seem to like a car that looks attractive and which they can see out of. I would bargain that most of them wouldn't recognise an original 500, Mini, 4 or 5 if they were run over by one.

Carl Parrish
Via email

DUNCE'S CAPTION

In James Disdale's article about the development of the Toyota Prius ('When two became one', 16 July), he refers to the new model as the Mk4. It's actually the Mk5.

Tom May
Via email

James correctly referred to it as the Mk5; the mistake was made by the caption writer. His apologies – KC

Weekly winner

Letter of the week wins this ValetPro exterior protection and maintenance kit worth £48

GREAT REASONS TO BUY

Next week's issue

ON SALE 6 AUGUST

INTERVIEW

EXCLUSIVE: THE FAMILY BEHIND FORD

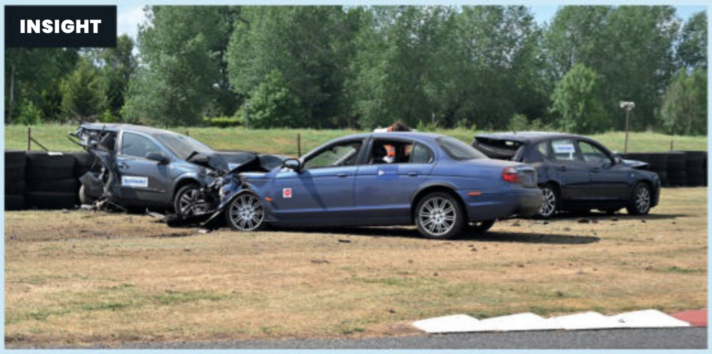
Ford has been led by its founding family for 122 years. Two generations of Ford tell us about that unique story and how it works in today's world

ROAD TEST

MORGAN SUPERSPORT

Its maker hopes this Plus Six successor could be a 911 alternative. Is it?

INSIGHT



LET'S SPEND THE DAY CRASHING CARS

Accident investigators crash cars to learn what NCAP tests can't reveal

EVERY WEEK

USED GUIDE

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How to nab this popular and reliable family SUV from just £13k

LIVING WITH A...

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We reveal how this elongated hot hatch fared as our daily driver

CONTENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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The original car magazine, published since 1895 'in the interests of the mechanically propelled road carriage'

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FIRST DRIVES

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HOW WE TEST CARS

Autocar delivers several kinds of reviews on new cars, with different levels of technical and functional scrutiny. As the name suggests, our First Drives section typically addresses cars that we're driving for the first time - either in final production form or as late prototypes. Time in the car can be limited here, technical and equipment specification might not be finalised and some systems software may not be to production specification. For those reasons, First Drive reports don't have star ratings.

Once we have driven a car for a second time in the UK, in right-hand-drive form and typically at greater length, we will rate it, either as part of a shorter UK test report or as the subject of a full, instrumented Road Test.

In the latter case, we take empirical performance and refinement benchmarks from it at Horiba MIRA proving ground, as well as subjective limit handling impressions, plus key measurements of practicality, efficiency and kerb weight.

All UK tests and Road Tests receive proper verdicts with star ratings informed by everything we have learned and the combined impressions and experience of several testers.

TESTED 19.7.25, ESTORIL, PORTUGAL **ON SALE** NOW

LAMBORGHINI TEMERARIO

Lambo's V10 died with the Huracán. Its replacement? A new V8 with two turbos and three electric motors

Unlike its various predecessors, Lamborghini's new junior supercar can't give you 10 cylinders – but it is offering 10,000rpm instead.

Being what Sant'Agata calls a high-performance electrified vehicle, or HPEV (that's a PHEV to everyone else), it can do electric-only running, of course. Just like its V12-engined big sibling, the Revuelto, it has taken very large leaps on power and outright performance, as well as smaller ones on size and passenger space, all of which we will come to.

But most of all, and despite having now hybridised the pair of them, Lamborghini wants the Temerario to have a different character from the bigger, faster, more serious Revuelto. It wants this car to be fun. Playful, rebellious and a bit of a tearaway. And, wouldn't you know it, that's what it seems to be.

This is precisely the kind of Huracán replacement you might come up with having learned – after introducing STO, Tecnica and Sterrato derivatives – that adding more and more power, revs and carbonfibre bodywork isn't the only route to enriching the appeal of a mid-engined exotic sports car. Or, put another way, that you can use the latest asymmetrical electric torque-vectoring technology in a different way from how it is executed on the Revuelto – to create even more accessible limit-handling appeal and something really compelling to drive on track at less than maximum-attack pace.

Notably, Lamborghini chose not to remove the atmospheric V12 when it hybridised the bigger Revuelto. Like it or not, though, the Huracán's sensational V10 has gone – and, 10,000rpm V8 or not, it will certainly be missed.

In its place comes an all-new, ▶

TESTER'S NOTE
The drift mode literally lets you pick your drift angle: 20, 30 or 40deg of positive attitude at positions one, two and three on the control knob. The front axle then imperceptibly helps you to maintain this and ultimately even to tidy up neatly. It's spookily clever, mostly because it feels so natural. **MS**

> **"It's a more accessible, tangible handling balance than any Huracán or Gallardo had"**

◀ flat-plane-crank, 4.0-litre V8 with titanium conrods, motorsport-grade finger-follower valvegear and what Lamborghini technical chief Rouven Mohr rather gleefully describes as "the biggest turbochargers we could find".

It produces 789bhp all by itself, and the fact that it makes 'only' 538lb ft of torque isn't really a weakness, because sandwiched between it and the rear-mounted eight-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox is one of three 148bhp axial-flux electric motors, ready to flood the rear wheels with however much twist your right foot might ask for.

Up front, there are two further motors of the same design and output, each one independently driving (and at times slowing) each front wheel – not only to accelerate and decelerate the car but also to manipulate its course and attitude, according to instructions from your hands and feet, as interpreted by Lamborghini's all-powerful LVDI 2.0 'chassis brain' computer.

The upshot is a car with fully 907bhp of peak system power, one capable of 0-62mph in just 2.7sec and 213mph at flat chat, despite weighing nearly 300kg more than the Tecnica did. And one with not only a regular launch control mode but also a line-lock-style mode in which the car will just keep on bonfiring its rear tyres right the way up to the top of fourth gear, if you like. And a drift mode to boot.

On outright length, the Temerario sits about midway between where the Huracán was and where the Revuelto is. It's 186mm longer than its predecessor, of which only 40mm has gone into the wheelbase, to help make a cabin that supposedly delivers about an inch and a half each of extra driver's leg room and head room.

Since I'm 6ft 3in tall and always struggled to fit in a Huracán with a helmet on, I was encouraged to read this. I was less impressed to find little apparent expansion of the car's actual accommodation levels in person. There's a bubble in the roof that would seem to make some extra head room available, but if you need to slide the seat all the way back to make room for your legs, your head likely won't quite line up with it. Well, mine didn't.

The Temerario's cabin has all the digital technology and performance drama that you would expect of it. There's the trademark switchgear apparently borrowed from a fighter jet. Also, all the matt-finish carbonfibre that you could wish for. Especially if you add the £30k lightweight package, which, combined with the carbon aero kit for the exterior, the titanium exhaust and the carbon wheels, knocks, erm… 25kg off the homologated weight of the car. That's more than £1000 per kilogram. Actually it's more, because the wheels cost extra again. But if you were counting, well, you would probably keep your sub-1400kg Huracán in the first place, wouldn't you?

Temerario is 0.5sec quicker to 62mph than already rapid Tecnica was

But, trust me, the Temerario is ready to provide lots of reasons not to be so sensible. Lamborghini's launch event at Estoril, Portugal, with late-series production prototypes, was conducted entirely in short, fairly frantic on-track bursts. So I can't tell you anything about how it rides or handles on the road – although for a car that Lamborghini insists is often daily driven, those are clearly important factors. Nor do I know how accessible its 907bhp might be in day-to-day driving. For all of that, we will await a car in the UK later this year.

I can't even say with total confidence how it sounds – when you're not wearing an open-face helmet with built-in ear defenders, at least. My impression was that it's a little like a supercar from another town in Emilia-Romagna, because Ferrari – until its recent preference for V6s at least – has probably laid the most prominent claim to the prickly, gristly snarl of a fast-revving, flat-plane-cranked V8. Is there the mechanical

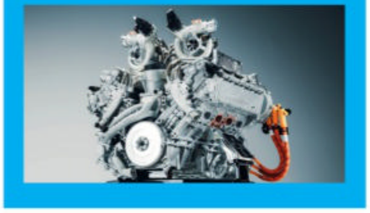
Interior is less cramped but still unmistakably Lambo

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THIS V8

The Temerario's new twin-turbocharged 3995cc V8, named L114, is Lamborghini's own development. It uses a 180deg flat-plane crankshaft, titanium conrods, reinforced bearings, and significantly oversquare cylinders in order to spin to its stratospheric redline. In fact, the 'finger-follower' valvegear that it adopts supposedly make it ready to work even as far as 11,000rpm in future applications.

Its parallel turbochargers are designed in a 'hot-vee' configuration, sitting within the 90deg bank angle of the cylinders – although they're actually too large to fit fully within it, mounted instead mostly on the top of the engine.

This connects directly to the nearby electric motor, which sits in a 'P1' position, upstream of the eight-speed gearbox (in the V12-engined Revuelto, the rear motor sits in a 'P2' position, in parallel with the gearbox).



richness or combustive music that we've come to expect from Lamborghini? Not really; not if I'm being picky.

But then none of Maranello's turbo V8s ever revved much beyond 8000. The roughness of the Temerario's engine transforms into fizzing vibration as it runs beyond normal crank speeds. Because there's always huge torque available, you could simply forget to keep your foot in. But then a car that feels searingly potent even less than halfway through its rev range becomes nothing short of extraordinary as it closes in on the redline. The Temerario doesn't need to rev to 10,000rpm, clearly; the only reason to let it is because it can. Because you will want to. And you will.

Truth be told, the Temerario doesn't quite seem to stop as urgently as it accelerates, but Lamborghini has tuned that torque-vectoring front axle to allow you to carry big speed into braking areas and to keep working the pedal deep into the turn-in phase while it bolsters the car's outright stability; and then – in Sport and Drift modes, at least – to vector torque the opposite way, to make the car pointy and agile, as soon as you come back on the power.

The result is more accessible, tangible handling balance than any Huracán or Gallardo had, not less of it, on account of that extra ballast. If you would rather it were fast and precise, Corsa mode has that covered. But if you want every corner to feel like a conversation between your wrists and right foot, and an engrossing, incremental trading-off of revs, speed, drive, course and angle of attack, Sport mode delivers first-order dynamic smarts, and a route to find your own dynamic groove on track and approach the chassis's limits in a more expressive way.

Is this some genius dynamic slam dunk, then? I should observe a few reservations. I'm not fully sold on the Temerario's light, filtered-feeling steering, which is no doubt necessarily muted so that you don't feel everything going on at the front axle. And if the chassis can mask its weight as cleverly in its ride on a road as it does on a track, I will be surprised. So too if it can make its angry-sounding V8 as soulful and enticing as the Huracán's V10 was.

There is work to do, clearly, for the Temerario to prove that it can feel like progress in every way compared with its predecessors. But it has certainly started like it means business.

MATT SAUNDERS

Enough head room for this six-footer – until he puts on a helmet

TECH SPEC

LAMBORGHINI TEMERARIO

Not the same operatic junior Lambo we've come to know, but incredible revs and newly adjustable handling smarts are ample compensation

Price £260,035
Engine V8, 3995cc, twin-turbocharged, petrol, plus three electric motors
Power 907bhp at 9000-9750pm (combined)
Torque 538lb ft at 4000-7000rpm (ICE)
Gearbox 8-spd dual-clutch automatic, 4WD
Dry weight 1690kg
0-62mph 2.7sec
Top speed 213mph
Battery 3.8kWh (usable)
Economy 25.2mpg
Electric range 6 miles
CO_2, tax band 272g/km, 37%
Rivals Ferrari 296 GTB, McLaren Artura

TESTED 22.7.25, SURREY **DELIVERIES** SEPTEMBER

MG IM5

Upmarket saloon offers 742bhp and a 357-mile range for less than £50k

European law makers are scrambling to protect the interests of their homegrown car makers, but the torrent of temptingly priced, technologically rapier-sharp Chinese EVs simply flows on. The latest insurgent is this, the MG IM5.

It's a saloon (well, a hatchback, technically) priced on a par with the Tesla Model 3 but promising the space of the Volkswagen ID 7 plus tech that you would more typically find on a Porsche Taycan – not least an 800V electrical architecture available on the more expensive derivatives. There is also, if you'd like, the small matter of 742bhp.

We will get into the hardware in a moment, but before that, you're possibly wondering what the 'IM' in the name is about. Those initials hold meaning, because they speak to the fact that this new MG isn't really an MG. It's a badge-engineered version of the Chinese-market IM L6, made by Intelligence in Motion, a Shanghai-based brand created in 2020 by MG parent company SAIC (the majority owner), e-commerce colossus Alibaba and Zhangjiang Hi-Tech.

This arrangement is a big deal, because the L6 is a lot more luxurious than anything MG has so far sold since its reimagining as an EV brand, notwithstanding the Cyberster roadster halo model.

In truth, the IM5 is only barely badge-engineered. For reasons we still don't quite understand, there are no actual MG logos on the car, only an 'MG' in IM's squiggly typeface on the bootlid.

It follows that the IM5 (and its IM6 SUV counterpart) use a platform separate from anything else we've known underneath an MG. With half an eye on the future, it's already compatible with solid-state battery technology, but for now cradles either a 75kWh LFP battery with an 400V architecture or a 100kWh NMC battery with an 800V one. These respectively enable rapid-charging rates of 153kW and a market-leading 400kW.

The IM5 Standard Range uses the former while the Long Range and Performance derivatives get the latter. MG expects most buyers to go for 100kWh, but a substantial percentage will take the sub-£40k 75kWh car and sidestep the UK's 'luxury car tax'.

Accurate steering and no-nonsense balance make for easy progress

You might wonder how IM managed to squeeze so much capacity into a smallish car, but the IM5 isn't actually that small. At 4931mm long, it's almost no shorter than the hulking ID 7, which itself is a rival to the BMW i5.

In the metal, the IM5 wears its considerable footprint neatly – certainly more neatly than the IM6. The curvaceous, lizard-eyed styling for both cars is recognisably of the modern Chinese school and was overseen by Slovakian designer Jozef Kaban, who has enjoyed stints at Rolls-Royce and Audi but is best known for the Bugatti Veyron.

All IM5 derivatives get rear-axle steering with an enormous 12deg of articulation – enough to have you praying that the engineers have got the calibration right at higher speeds. The benefit is low-speed manoeuvrability: the IM5 has a turning circle similar to that of the MG 4 EV hatchback.

MG's interiors have come a long way in not a long time, but even so, the IM5 is in another

league of material lavishness and lounge-like atmosphere compared with its lesser range-mates. Soft, voluptuous surfaces trimmed in synthetic leather and a broad, raked 'transmission tunnel' into which a 10.5in control touchscreen is embedded – à la Taycan – give the sense that this is a car from a more lofty brand. Which, let us not forget, is essentially the case.

Equally, there's a faintly cartoonish manner to the architecture that lends the place a certain genericness. You couldn't call the IM5's cabin superficially plush, because perceived quality is high, but it does lack charm and individuality.

The lack of physical switchgear will annoy you, too, and the IM5 is right up there with the Model 3 and Volvo EX30 in its attempts to create a minimalist space. Wing mirror adjustments are, for instance, made first by a tap or two on the central display and then with the steering wheel controls.

Might the driving experience make up for these foibles? Even the slowest IM5, the 75kWh Standard Range, makes a healthy-sounding 291bhp – and from there, the numbers escalate considerably. Most people will surely be happy enough with the 402bhp of the rear-driven 100kWh Long Range, but for those who want proper contemporary super-saloon straight-line speed, the 742bhp, four-wheel-drive 100kWh Performance offers just that, and then some.

Of that mind-scrambling total, 402bhp is delivered by the rear motor, with the rest coming from an identical unit at the front. Push the accelerator pedal the full extent of its travel and the car's coldly delivered turn of pace is shocking. Once or twice really is enough.

However, it's not like whip-crack acceleration is remorselessly thrust upon you. There are three maps for the responsiveness of this dual-motor powertrain, but even the most aggressive still allows torque to be fed in neatly. Ask for everything and there are moments when the traction control smoothly but noticeably pegs the motors' efforts back a touch, but in general the pick-up is neat and the delivery linear, as we've come to expect from super-EVs.

There's a passive spring-and-damper set-up whichever variant you go for. In its most rarefied trim, the IM6 gets adaptive dampers and air springs, but there's currently no prospect of this hardware making its way onto the IM5.

Ride quality is mixed. The long-wave gait is generally as mature as you would hope for in a 5m-long saloon with an endless wheelbase and it deals with speed bumps in effortless fashion, but the ride never truly settles unless you're on a glass-smooth surface.

It's a reactivity that could be forgiven in a car with genuine handling appeal, but that's something the IM5 doesn't have. It steers accurately (the rear-axle articulation never feels unnatural once you're up and running) and the electrically assisted rack has a reasonably instinctive weight and speed about it that makes the IM5 hassle-free to flow along. But in terms of dynamism and driving satisfaction, this is pretty thin gruel, with the priority being po-faced body control and neutrality.

The IM5 is, however, wonderfully quiet. With a aerodynamic drag coefficient of 0.23, it glides along with so little wind and tyre roar that you can sometimes hear the motors whirring on the overrun.

So the IM5 is flawed, notably with rear visibility, cockpit ergonomics and that forgettable driving experience, but from a value-based perspective, its appeal is undeniable. How many other EVs can you name with near-supercar straight-line performance, space for the family, more than 350 miles of real-world range if you're careful and a charging speed normally the preserve of premium-brand models, all for less than £50,000?

RICHARD LANE

IM5's standard kit level is high; 'immersive display' is 26.3in and operates slickly

"Its coldly delivered turn of pace is shocking. Once or twice really is enough"

TESTER'S NOTE

If you get yourself into a tight spot or stuck down a dead end, the IM5 can slowly reverse itself back along the precise line it came in on, up to 100m. **RL**

TECH SPEC

MG IM5 100 PERFORMANCE

Lacks polish but its pace, striking looks and 800V electricals make a considerable splash at this price

Price £48,495
Engine Two permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 742bhp
Torque 592lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, 4WD
Kerb weight 2298kg
0-62mph 3.2sec
Top speed 166mph
Battery 100kWh (total)
Range, economy 357 miles, 3.1mpkWh
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 3%
Rivals Polestar 2 Dual Motor Performance, Tesla Model 3 Performance, VW ID 7 GTX

UK VERDICTS

TESTED 22.7.25, HAMPSHIRE **DELIVERIES** NOW

BMW M3 CS TOURING

Competition Sport package is offered on an estate for the first time

Following simple 1+1=2 thinking, the BMW M3 CS Touring was inevitable. After all, there have been hardcore CS versions of the M3 saloon and the M4 coupé, so logic dictates that the same carbonfibre canards, gold wheels, added power and chassis tweaks would be applied to the M3 estate. Then again, exceptions like the kerb-hopping Volvo 850 BTCC car aside, track-ready estates have always been a rare thing, probably because the combination of extra weight and practicality seems incompatible with pure performance. Even Mercedes-AMG has always chosen coupés as the bases for its Black Series cars.

But actually, I'd argue that an estate makes total sense here. No modern M3 or M4 is particularly light. The standard M3 saloon (which these days always comes with xDrive four-wheel drive in the UK) weighs 1780kg, so whether you add 85kg to make it an estate or subtract 15kg by way of various carbon bits (the rear seats remain in place) to make it a CS, are you really going to notice?

What you will notice is how much easier it is to stuff a spare set of wheels and a trolley jack into the back of an estate than it is with a saloon or a coupé. It is at once race car and support vehicle – surely the pinnacle of efficiency.

On an M3 CS, you also have a choice of tyres that you don't have on a standard M3. BMW's online configurator confusingly just calls them Sport, Track or Extreme Track tyres, without specifying what you're actually getting. Sport is Michelin Pilot Sport 4S or Pirelli P Zero, Track is Pilot Sport Cup 2 or P Zero Corsa and Extreme Track is Pilot Sport Cup 2 R or P Zero Trofeo RS. They're all road-legal, but if you're really

Rear seats are standard 3 Series items so can fold down in a 40/20/40 split

“It’s an incredibly versatile, competent and therefore confidence-inspiring track car”

Leather trim and Alcantara wheel are standard; red and black trim is model-exclusive

TESTER’S NOTE

BMW’s carbon bucket seats are divisive. Some like them for their lateral support and the low driving position they allow. I find them too thinly padded and lacking in lumbar and thigh support. And even with the side bolsters inflated all the way, I still had to brace myself for corners on track. **IV**

serious about track days, it’s worth bringing some spares.

Technically, the changes compared with the normal M3 Touring are the same as those that turned the standard M4 into the M4 CS that we road tested in our 23 April issue. In short: you get various carbon parts (such as the bonnet and centre console) in a slightly tokenistic lightweighting effort and 20bhp extra by way of increased boost pressure. It’s really a chassis exercise, with stiffer springs, more aggressive geometry and more rose joints in the suspension. Everything that’s electronically controlled, such as the dampers, steering and stability control, also receives a CS-specific tune. And then there are those gold wheels, which look just perfect on our British Racing Green test car.

Given this is effectively the estate version of the M4 CS, it won’t surprise you to learn that the two are pretty similar to drive. I got to try them back to back at Thruxton Circuit, and while you can just about feel that there’s an enlarged boot throwing its weight around on turn-in, it’s pretty minor stuff.

Most of all, though, this is an incredibly versatile, competent and therefore confidence-inspiring track car, particularly on the Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres. This rubber’s enormous grip and the M3’s natural balance mean it stays very stable through Thruxton’s fast sweepers and gives you the latitude to keep pushing yourself for higher corner speeds and later braking (which the carbon-ceramics just shrug off).

You can easily build up to whatever level you feel comfortable with, thanks to the vast configurability of the traction control, stability control and four-wheel drive systems. Even in their most conservative modes, they work almost imperceptibly.

As with all recent four-wheel-drive M cars, the M3 CS Touring can also switch to rear-wheel-drive mode. Although the Cup 2s put up a good fight, they are ultimately no match for 543bhp. The rear breaks away more sharply than it might on the 4Ss, but once the car is sliding, it will continue to do so for as long as you feel like it.

I also tried the M3 CS Touring on the road, this time on the 4Ss. It trades some ride and isolation for a more keyed-in feel to the steering and more grip. It generally has a very serious feel to it: even with the xDrive system in 4WD Sport mode, it tends to grip and go rather than wag its tail. The car wants to go very fast, which is something it does very well, but there is obviously a limit to how far you can go with that.

As a pure road car in the UK, the M3 CS doesn’t justify its substantial price premium over a normal M3 or M340i, let alone an Alpina B3. But as a road car that can transform into a regular track-day tool or blast through France and take in some endlessly winding mountain roads, there is absolutely a place for it.

With five doors and 500-1510 litres of boot space, the Touring can just take more stuff on those adventures, whether that’s people, tyres or the dog. It makes you wonder why there aren’t more track-day estates.

ILLYA VERPRAET

TECH SPEC

BMW M3 CS TOURING

Doesn’t lose any of the saloon’s focus but gains practicality, which matters more than you might think

★★★★☆

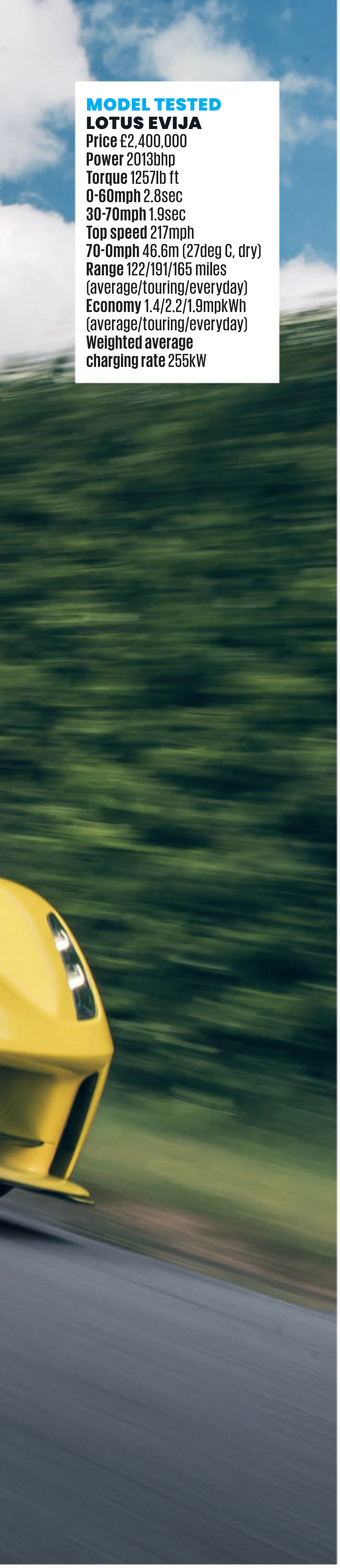
Price £126,275
Engine 6 cyls in line, 2993cc, twin-turbocharged, petrol
Power 543bhp at 6250rpm
Torque 479lb ft at 2750-5950rpm
Gearbox 8-spd automatic, 4WD
Kerb weight 1850kg
0-62mph 3.5sec
Top speed 186mph
Economy 26.9mpg
CO$_2$, tax band 238g/km, 37%
Rivals Audi RS4 Avant Edition 25 Years, Mercedes-AMG C63 S E Performance Estate

ROAD TEST

AUTOCAR ROAD TEST 5763

LOTUS EVIJA

This is the most powerful car we've tested – and it wears a Lotus badge



MODEL TESTED
LOTUS EVIJA
Price £2,400,000
Power 2013bhp
Torque 1257lb ft
0-60mph 2.8sec
30-70mph 1.9sec
Top speed 217mph
70-0mph 46.6m (27deg C, dry)
Range 122/191/165 miles (average/touring/everyday)
Economy 1.4/2.2/1.9mpkWh (average/touring/everyday)
Weighted average charging rate 255kW

Between all the talk of more layoffs and even a UK factory closure, Lotus Cars Ltd could do with a good news story right now. And it just so happens that the headline performance car project that Hethel itself has been working on for the past five years is at last ready for the scrutiny of the Autocar road test.

So, when you need to cut through the noise and remind the world what your brand is capable of, you can always hand over the most powerful hypercar yet delivered into series production and let Autocar fix satellite timing gear to it. That ought to do the trick.

Finally, and after a rather protracted gestation, the Evija has landed. This road test will aim not to concern itself with whether, philosophically or strategically, it is the right kind of car for Lotus to have made at all, how many it has sold, or how close to its production-run target of 130 units it is ever likely to get in light of the hypercar-buying public's apparent lingering ambivalence towards megawatt EVs.

Here and now, we will simply pore over this stunning hypercar, survey its design, interrogate its habitability and usability on the road, and witness the outer limits of its dynamic capabilities on track, as only the Autocar road test can.

Spoiler alert: those are quite some outer limits. By the time we're finished here, your idea of what 'fast' looks like in terms of numbers on a page – and what it feels like from the driver's seat – might never be the same again.

DESIGN & ENGINEERING

★★★★★

PROS Uncompromising specification; sensational aero; equally sensational to look at
CONS Not one, perhaps, for the owners' club faithful

It's six years since the unveiling of the Lotus Evija at the 2019 Shanghai motor show. Coming only 18 months after Lotus's acquisition by Geely, the Evija was one almighty statement of ambition by Hethel's new majority owners – and likewise a massive vote of confidence in British engineering, and reaffirmation of Lotus's status as a British brand. This was to be the most powerful hypercar in the world.

It came with a 'target power output' of 2000 horsepower (which the finished car has actually exceeded). But today? Well, the Koenigsegg Gemera hybrid hypercar was announced in 2020 with a promise of 2268bhp, and lately we have also seen unveiled Rimac's 2108bhp Nevera R.

However, whether those cars quite count until they are in the hands of customers can be debated. We can credit Lotus with achieving something truly momentous either way. The series-production hypercar can only smash its way through the 2000bhp barrier once. And this is quite the way to do it.

Evija reveal previewed Lotus's new era

The Evija's carbonfibre monocoque chassis is made by CPC in Italy. It weighs less than 150kg, and to it are duly fixed aluminium crash structures; double-wishbone axles front and rear, with pushrod-actuated inboard struts (see 'Technical focus', p31); a 91kWh nickel-manganese-cobalt drive battery, developed by Williams Advanced Engineered and carried amidships, where a combustion engine might otherwise be; and no fewer than four permanent magnet synchronous motors, one per wheel, each with its own reduction gearing and silicon-carbide power inverter.

Each motor is rated for peak power of 503bhp and 314lb ft of torque. And so, at its most fevered, the Evija produces 2013bhp and 1257lb ft.

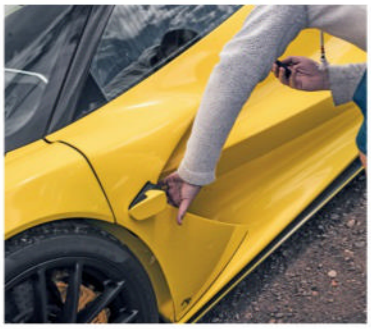
It weighed 1906kg on Horiba MIRA's scales (Hethel's initial target weight was just under 1700kg, but the battery capacity has expanded since that original show car), making for a power-to-weight ratio of more than 1050bhp per tonne. A regular Rimac Nevera manages less than 900bhp per tonne, the new R 'only' 930bhp per tonne. And for every other ultra-high-performance car of the past decade or so, exceeding 750bhp per tonne has been rare (Bugatti Chiron Super Sport 799bhp per tonne, Aston Martin Valkyrie 911bhp per tonne). Clearly, in this respect, Lotus's new hypercar hero will take some surpassing.

INTERIOR

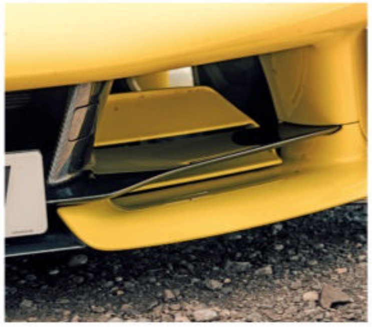
★★★★½

PROS Great driving position; easy entry and a comfy seat; elegant, Lotus-typical cabin design
CONS No luggage space except in lieu of a passenger; seriously limited rear visibility and left-hand-drive-only layout can be a problem on the road

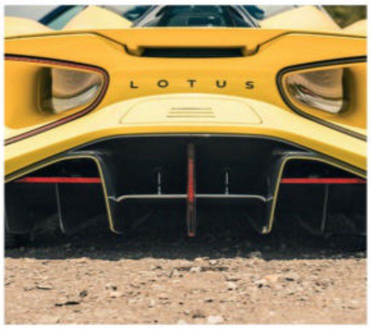
The Evija's passenger doors are powered, working via the same hydraulic circuit that motivates the suspension lift system and active rear wing. They're dihedral (similar to McLaren's take on wing-like doors, rather than the Mercedes gullwing) and are opened either via the key fob or a button hidden within the air scoop on each door's forward edge. They are also of a wraparound design incorporating ▶



■ There are no door handles. The only exterior release is a vaguely TVR-reminiscent button hidden within the air scoop towards the front of the door. Press it and stand back – or get a bruised shin.



■ The venturis at the back catch the eye, but there are similar at the front, directing air around the front wheels and accelerating it down the car's flanks. Splitter looks serious but isn't so ridiculous that it ever grounds out on the road.



■ Rear aspect is incredible. Track mode, with the rear numberplate removed, makes the huge rear diffuser seem even bigger. Venturi tunnels have LED strip brake lights and indicators around their periphery.

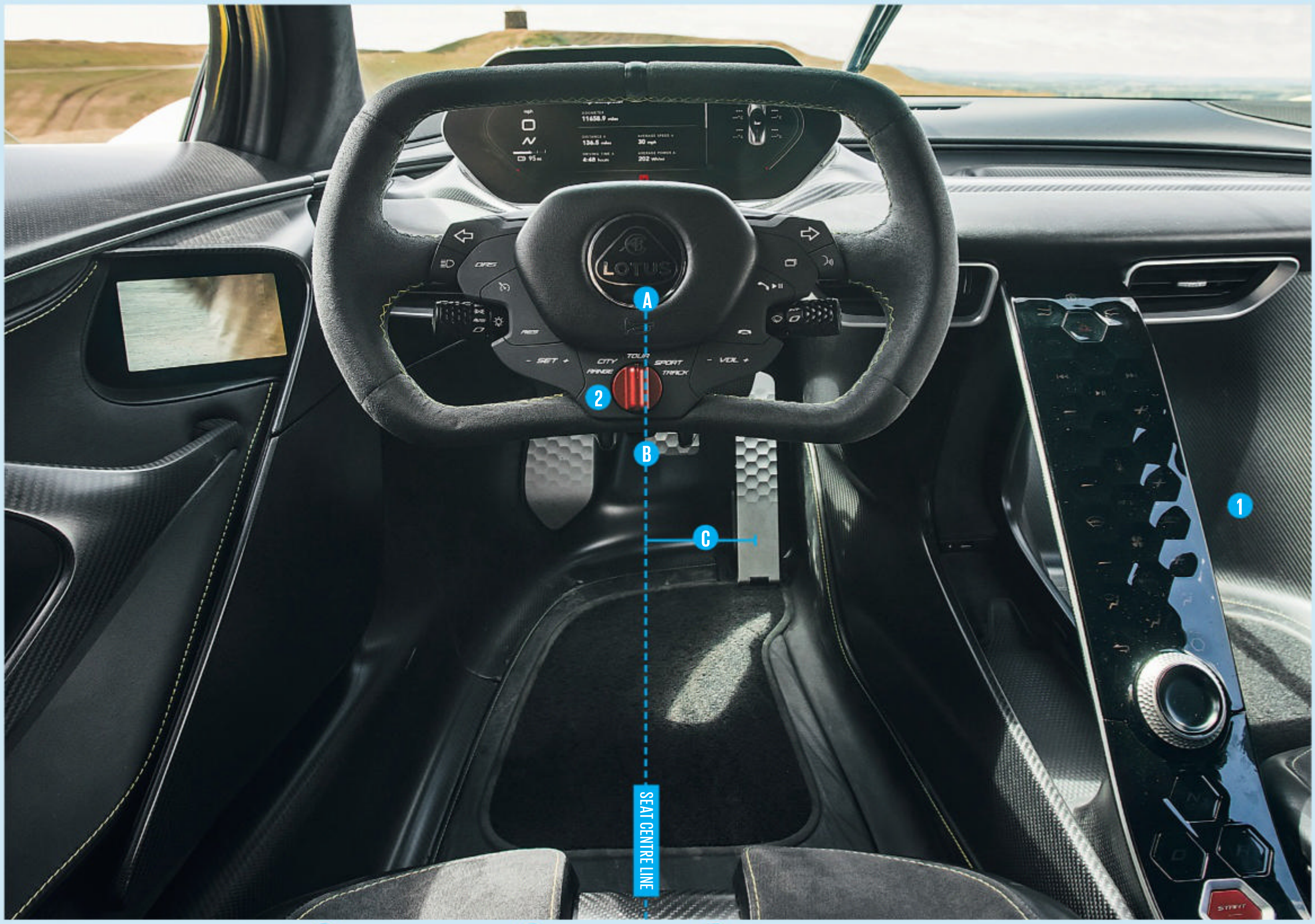
■ Single windscreen wiper has been designed to come to rest at the vertical, just as a racing prototype's does. We can't imagine it makes too much difference to drag – but it does look cool.

PHOTOGRAPHY JACK HARRISON

① Skeletal fascia design leaves the footwells open to natural light, which not only enhances your sense of space but also picks out the beautiful cast aluminium pedals singularly well.

② Five-position manettino-style drive mode selector has Range, City, Tour, Sport and Track settings. City, says Lotus, is also something of a 'rain' mode (although the P Zero Trofeo R Pirellis certainly aren't suited to use in slippery conditions).

③ Door controls are up on the roof console above your head. You have to pull and hold as the powered door sweeps closed, a little like in a Rolls-Royce. That, apparently, is so you're less likely to trap things inadvertently.



WHEEL AND PEDAL ALIGNMENT Ⓐ Steering offset 0mm Ⓑ Brake offset 0mm Ⓒ Accelerator offset 115mm right. Brake is aligned perfectly with the seat's centre line and is reachable with either foot. Steering column adjusts surprisingly widely. Non-circular steering rim is a little unintuitive to pass through your hands at tight steering angles.

◂ the lower sill, so you learn pretty fast to take a step backwards as they swing open so as not to get a bang on the shin from a jutting carbonfibre edge. But once they're open you benefit from having very little 'sill' left to actually step over on your way in.

It was one of founder Colin Chapman's mantras that Lotus's cars should always have individual systems and components capable of doing multiple jobs, in order to save weight. The Evija's beautifully simple 'floating wing' dashboard illustrates this. It joins with the car's steering column and centre console but also carries its instrument screen, and its heating and ventilation system. And, being so lean, it leaves the farther reaches of the footwells open to light flooding in through the windscreen, illuminating the car's attractive cast aluminium pedals.

A pair of carbon-shelled bucket seats have part-electric adjustment, and are sufficiently thinly padded that you will want to berth them carefully, but are surprisingly comfortable once you have. There are three-point seatbelts rather than racing harness-style restraints and a steering wheel of a slim-rimmed, wide, almost rectangular shape like that of a modern prototype racing car, mounted on a steering column that adjusts manually for both reach and rake. There are no column stalks: from indicators to headlights to wipers to drive modes, every secondary control is carried on a busy but intelligible steering boss.

Exposed carbonfibre is everywhere, from doortops to footwells. Separate digital displays stand in for every rear-view mirror (the car's body design and battery positioning preclude any potential for over-shoulder visibility), while a hexagonal instrument screen doubles as the multimedia display. For UK owners especially (all Evijas are left-hand drive), the resulting lack of over-shoulder visibility will make negotiating offset junctions something of a guessing game, but then such compromises aren't so much flaws as occasional reminders of the rarest hypercar territory in which the Evija operates.

There are capacitive 'buttons' on the ski slope-style centre stack for heating and ventilation control and the audio system, with a rotary selector dial at the foot of the panel for navigating the screen ahead of you, so overall usability becomes intuitive enough. Wireless smartphone mirroring is included; just don't imagine anyone you're having a telephone conversation with at speed is going to hear you very well, for reasons we will come to.

The cabin storage is very limited. There are no door pockets or cupholders, just a slim centre console that will retain a phone and a wallet or purse. Likewise, there's no frunk or boot for your weekend luggage, nor even a racing helmet. Wherever you're going in this car, you'll be going solely for the drive.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

PROS Accelerates – through the higher-speed ranges, especially – like almost nothing else with numberplates; 'live' torque vectoring at this magnitude is fascinating and wild in equal measure

CONS You would never get more than a mere hint of it on the road

Before you can understand how quickly the Evija can hurl itself into the middle distance, it is worth taking a moment to consider what's motivating it – and exactly how. Take a notional modern, four-wheel-drive, combustion-engined performance car for comparison. One weighing roughly what our Lotus does. Something like a BMW M4 Competition.

Assuming the car in question has a driveline that distributes torque equally front to rear, when you select third gear the engine can probably gradually build up to send an effective 800lb ft to each of its wheels (accounting for the effect of the gearing). Which sounds like a lot, but then M4s aren't slow.

The Evija is, in one sense, like a four-wheel-drive performance car that *only ever needs* third gear, because its motors can be permanently connected to its wheels, work from zero rpm and rev to 17,000. But each of them can – or, rather, could – send some 1800lb ft of effective torque to each of its wheels, and do it from standing, the instant you asked, and then just keep on sending it for quite a long time without the slightest pause.

They also combine to make four times as much peak power as that notional car's combustion engine could. And managing that kind of power and torque… well, it's quite some way beyond the remit of the average traction control system.

Without any kind of electronic governance, the Evija would be undrivable. Just floor it, and within about a second you would have four wheels, each rotating at 217mph, and an uncontrollable car making a lot of smoke but going just about nowhere. That's why the only system of equal influence on this car's performance as its electric powertrain is its vastly sophisticated torque-vectoring and traction control system. It has to be. It is the supercomputer that keeps this fifth-generation fighter jet in the sky.

On the move and in full flight, the Evija feels less like one particular kind of performance car as it ▸

TECHNICAL FOCUS

SUSPENSION

Suspension design is a serious business when the suspension in question has to support a road-legal production car with a totally unprecedented performance level that can develop as much downforce as the Evija can (see below). You have to think like you're making a top-level endurance prototype as much as anything else.

The Evija's innovative body design is enabled by its inboard layout of pushrod-actuated suspension struts, with those at the rear of the car being very much on display. The struts themselves are motorsport-grade coil springs and spool valve adaptive dampers supplied by Multimatic, which enable a softer damping rate for the car during road driving in City and Tour modes, and then firmer control for higher speeds.

A separate third strut for each axle is deployed as a heave damper, which acts a bit like the opposite of an anti-roll bar: to absorb only those forces that affect both sides of each axle simultaneously. They are there to better support the Evija as its downforce builds at very high speeds; to keep its platform level, so that downforce is produced consistently; and to enable lower vertical spring rates (the stiffness of the coil springs for each individual wheel) so that the car's ride and handling can be gentler and more manageable at lower speeds.

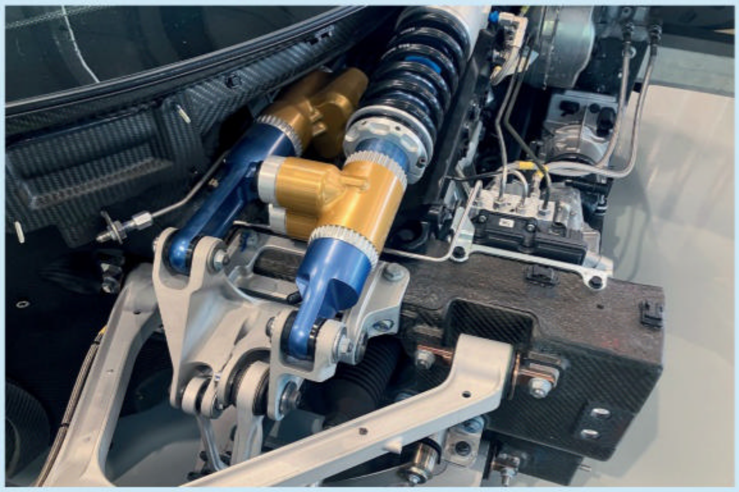
AERODYNAMICS

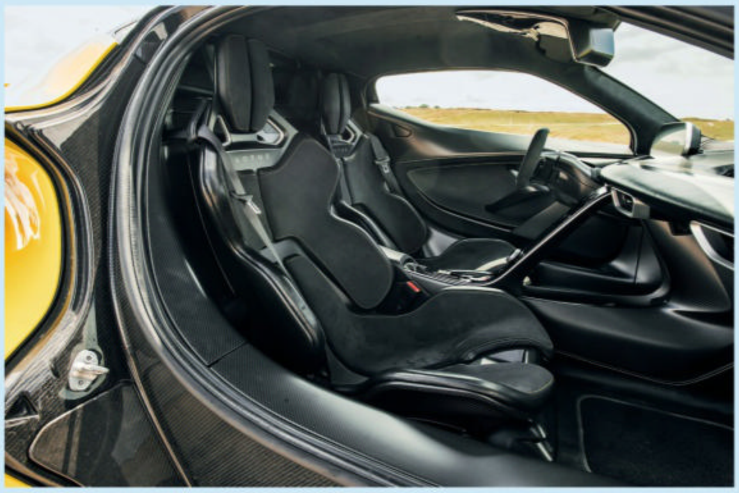
A concept that Lotus calls 'porosity' primarily defines the Evija's appearance, and the way that high-pressure air can move over – and, indeed, through – it at speed.

The venturi tunnels around the rear flanks are the clearest example of this. They accelerate air through the rear of the car, creating low-pressure zones ahead of the rear axle that effectively suck air in. They then fire it into the Evija's wake, cleaning up the car's 'dirty air', reducing the aerodynamic drag that this wake exerts and making the various other aerodynamic devices work more efficiently.

Among those other devices are an underbody rear diffuser that runs from the level of the B-pillar backwards to the rearmost extremity of the car (the rear numberplate has to be removed before it can work at its optimum, in Track mode); a carbonfibre front splitter, which channels air around and away from the front wheels to reduce pressure up front; and a hydraulically actuated rear wing that can run at several different levels, either to create downforce or work as a drag reduction system.

In terms of outright downforce, the Evija can generate up to 1500kg of it at its governed top speed of 217mph, which is more than 75% of the weight of the car, pressing downwards on its tyres and suspension, bolstering grip and stability, but creating challenges of its own.





FRONT Leg room 1060mm, head room 930mm. Hard-shelled front seats look short on comfort, and do need to be berthed with care, but are decently comfortable once you're in and at least a little adjustable.

IN THE FRONT

Entry to the front seats is quite easy, thanks to the cutaway sill. That the driving position is so low is the biggest hurdle, but both seatback angle and steering column reach adjust, so comfort isn't hard to find once you're in. Cabin storage is scant but for a narrow cubby between the footwells. Rearwards visibility is almost non-existent, although three rear-view cameras do a respectable job. Head room was sufficient to admit a 6ft 3in tester wearing a racing helmet – just.

"Even when properly dialled in, this car is an utterly staggering, eye-popping drive"

◂ accelerates than three or even four. From rest to 60mph (2.8sec), it's fast but not vastly excessive; perhaps supercar-fast. Thereafter, up to 100mph (which it hits in 4.8sec), it begins to gather itself and open the taps a little, taking on what we might consider established hypercar pace.

But only beyond 100mph does the Evija show its real potential, once there's enough downforce on the front wheels for the electronics to fully unleash the front motors, which, like the rest, don't even hit peak power until the far side of 110mph anyway. Even here, this car feels like it's engaged in a constant and incremental process of unshackling itself; of pitching massive power and increasing downforce against available mechanical grip, mass and drag – with Herculean results. It just goes, and goes again, and then goes again, somehow harder still.

Giving a car like this its head, even in a straight line and with two lanes of a proving ground's mile straights to straddle, is an exercise requiring a lot of faith and commitment. Preparation, too: you won't want to do it before you have adjusted the pressure in the Trofeo R tyres, because cold, soft sidewalls inflated only to road-appropriate pressure simply won't support the load, weight and building downforce. And driving on flat tyres at 150mph, with 0.8g of forward thrust still in the mix, isn't much fun.

But, at its very quickest and even when properly dialled in, this car is an utterly staggering, eye-popping drive. The steering wheel jinks with every bump and newly vectored slug of torque. The whistling, whirring, high-frequency whine of the motors and transmissions, quite dramatic and noisy at first, is gradually drowned out by the

The Evija has a good rapport with the road and is remarkably biddable for a 2013bhp hypercar

You'll discover the Evija's Lotus DNA long before its performance potential

TRACK NOTES ★★★⯪☆

PROS Incredibly level, prototype-grade body control; electric powertrain stays the course
CONS Torque vectoring can corrupt the steering unhelpfully; not a chassis you could ever feel fully 'on top of'

The Evija, admits Lotus, has the kind of pace that makes its own Hethel circuit seem a bit like a French municipal karting track. By that measure, MIRA's Dunlop handling circuit – where the longest straight is only about a quarter of a mile – is even smaller and narrower still.

The Evija's Trofeo R tyres do need a period of warming to allow the car the sort of mechanical grip level on which its torque-vectoring system depends. Once they have attained it, a chassis that felt a little inert and micro-managed before begins to feel more natural and engaging.

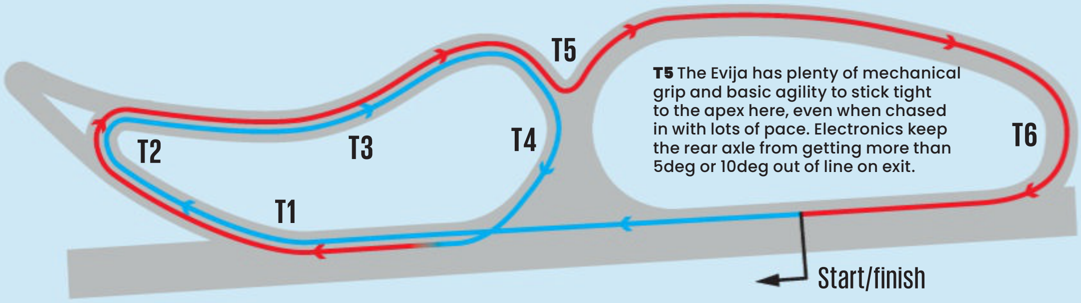
There's always at least a little tractive corruption of the steering apparent in longer, faster bends, as the front motors tweak and tune the car's attitude and line, and no driving mode in which the car feels like it isn't to some extent driving itself.

Even in Sport mode (the one with the boldest active torque calibration), the Evija demurs from the kind of whip-crack alertness you might expect of independently driven wheels, because it means, instead, to inspire confidence and thereby to empower you to tap fully into that titanic ocean of force.

When Lotus's chassis don, director of vehicle attributes Gavan Kershaw, says that most owners "wouldn't want to be dealing with a 2000-horsepower EV hypercar at 50deg of slip angle", we can trust that he has found out as much personally, and take him at his word.

The car's carbon-ceramic brakes (the Evija shuns regenerative braking entirely, preferring the most consistent and predictable friction-only braking system possible) lasted several laps on circuit without any apparent fade, but did evidence some during our high-speed runs. And the most accelerative thing on four wheels could, to be fair, do with stopping power with absolutely no ifs or buts.

HORIBA MIRA HANDLING AND STABILITY CIRCUIT



T5 The Evija has plenty of mechanical grip and basic agility to stick tight to the apex here, even when chased in with lots of pace. Electronics keep the rear axle from getting more than 5deg or 10deg out of line on exit.

T1 Pin the car flat from the exit of T6 and you would be barrelling through here at close to 160mph, with plenty of stopping to do for T2. It's a test of nerve.

T4 As the front-axle motors pulse positive torque to keep the car on line, and the brakes grab to kill excess wheel speed, the steering can feel a little corrupted through T4. As the tyres warm through, however, this fades.

increasing, reverberating roar of the tyres and wind.

Your focus is fixed on a vanishing point, but the world is hurtling through your peripheral vision at a frankly incomprehensible rate. And all you can do is pick your braking point – and be damn sure to hit it – and then contemplate what's just occurred.

The Evija reaches 100mph very quickly, although not exceptionally so, at 4.8sec (Tesla Model S Plaid 4.6sec, Ferrari SF90 Stradale also 4.8sec). But from there it goes from 100-150mph in less than 3.0sec, which is at least 50% quicker than any other car we have ever road tested. And then, from 150-200mph, its advantage grows wider still.

It's rare that we can time a car all the way from rest to 200mph with the testing facilities that are regularly available to us. Most cars just need too much space. But over that trip – for which a McLaren F1 needed 28.0sec in 1994 and a Bugatti Veyron Super Sport 22.2sec in 2011 – the Evija needed just 13.0sec in 2025.

It's a phenomenon. In bald performance terms, a monumental leap. No current competition car of any kind, by any estimation worth trusting, would be more than a second or so quicker from rest to 200mph – not a Formula 1 car, nor a top-level Le Mans prototype.

RIDE & HANDLING
★★★★☆

PROS Chassis isn't out of its depth at all at Herculean speeds; it isn't ridiculously firm or highly strung on the road as a consequence
CONS Feels underutilised at normal road speeds; four-wheel vectoring tends to stabilise, not animate, the chassis

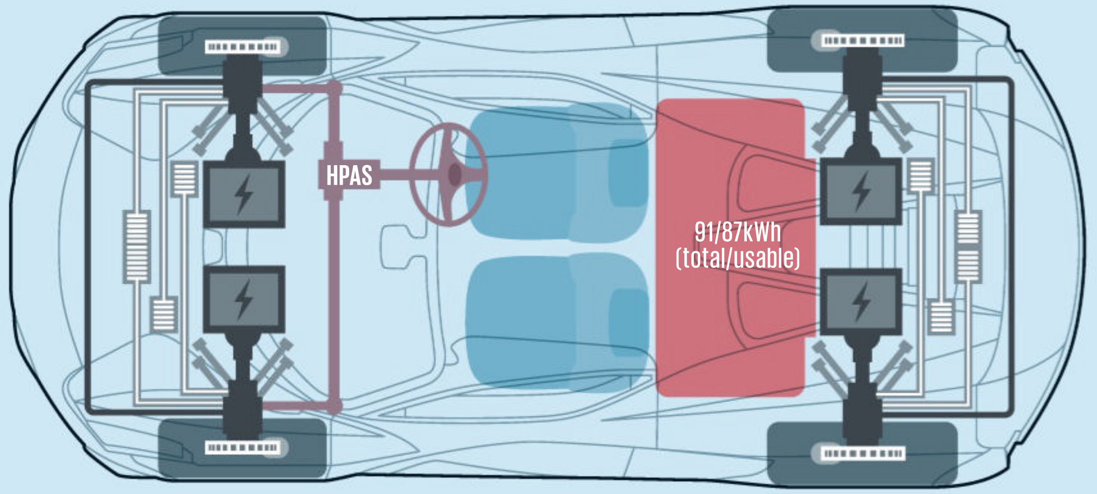
Lotus's renowned chassis engineers admit that the Evija could, in theory, have been endowed with almost any kind of handling they cared to imagine – or, perhaps rather, could code for.

With an independent electric motor per wheel, you can achieve almost any dynamic trick you like. A car that can turn in so directly that the chassis has hit peak 'yaw' before its body has really had time to roll, for example. So the question they grappled with wasn't what *can* we do, but what *should* we? What would make sense? What would feel right? Particularly, like a Lotus?

'Natural' was pretty much what they settled on. And so the Evija isn't the kind of electric car that has a drift mode, or that can donut almost within the length of its own wheelbase. Rather, there's a seriousness and a reassuring stability about its dynamic character that you would expect of the very fastest thing on four wheels that you're ever likely to drive. ▸

The drama begins when you open the dihedral doors and continues well beyond 200mph

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATION



LOTUS EVIJA

On-the-road price £2,400,000
Price as tested Unspecified

FITTED EQUIPMENT

Standard Digital instrument display including multimedia functions and smartphone mirroring, LMP-style steering wheel, adjustable for rake angle, with five-position drive mode selection, camera-based rear-view mirrors, black leather and Alcantara bucket seats with three-point inertia reel seatbelts, powered dihedral doors, active rear wing, carbon-ceramic brakes, 20in/21in aluminium alloy aero wheels **Optional** LAP centre-lock magnesium wheels (£24,000), Pinstripe Pack, Solaris Yellow (£9600)

MOTORS & BATTERY

Installation One per wheel, transverse, fully asymmetrical, 4WD
Type Four permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 2013bhp
Torque 1257lb ft
Maximum regen capacity na
Battery type NMC
Capacity 91/87kWh (total/usable)
Voltage 677V
Power to weight 1067bhp per tonne
Torque to weight 666lb ft per tonne

GEARBOX

Type 1-spd reduction gear

TECHNICAL LAYOUT

The Evija uses a carbonfibre monocoque chassis, made by CPC of Modena in Italy, to which the front and rear axles are directly bolted. Drive is via one inboard electric motor per wheel. Suspension is via double wishbones and pushrod-actuated coil springs and spool valve adaptive dampers.

Reduction ratio 5.9:1
mph per 1000rpm 14.5
Motor rpm at 70/80mph 4842/5534

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction Carbonfibre monocoque, carbonfibre body, with active aero and powered dihedral doors
Weight/as tested 1887kg/1906kg
Weight distribution (f/r) 42%/58%
Drag coefficient 0.41
Wheels 9.5Jx20in (f), 12.5Jx21in (r)
Tyres 265/35 ZR20 99Y (f), 325/30 ZR21 108Y (r), Pirelli P Zero Trofeo R
Spare None

SUSPENSION

Front and rear Double wishbones with inboard pushrods, coil springs and adaptive spool valve dampers, plus additional separate heave dampers; lateral anti-roll bar (f), torsion anti-roll bar (r)

STEERING

Type HPAS, rack and pinion
Turns lock to lock 2.4
Turning circle 12.0m

BRAKES

Front 390mm ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, six-piston calipers
Rear 390mm ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, four-piston calipers

Handbrake type Electronic, switch

SAFETY

Passive measures Motorsport-grade carbonfibre monocoque chassis, separate aluminium alloy crash structures front and rear, two inertia reel seatbelts
Euro NCAP rating Not tested

EMISSIONS & TAX

CO_2 0g/km
BIK at 20/40% pcm na

It isn't like some near-two-tonne, 2000-horsepower, all-electric Elise or Emira, however – because a car that could provide so much accessible, carefree fun through the apex of a third-gear corner couldn't convincingly also be the same car that then hurled itself away from the exit as if being sucked into a wormhole.

Above all else, the Evija needed to be coherent and consistent to drive: and it is – as well as communicative, responsive, adhesive, level, balanced and surprisingly road-capable.

Its track manners are mostly about grip, traction, precision and security, much more than on-limit adjustability and engagement (see 'Track notes', p33), but at calmer road speeds its surprising mildness and tactility really bubble to the surface. It has only medium-fast-paced steering, rather than a Maranello-quick 1.9 turns between locks. That steering is heavy and chatty, fully keyed into the surface and a little sensitive to camber and bump, and tractive forces – though not, at normal speeds at least, reactive enough to have your heart in your mouth.

There is, in short, only a little hyperactivity, restiveness and skittishness about the Evija's on-road ride and handling (in each case scant enough to be remarkable given this car's vast performance potential) and absolutely no nervousness.

It's certainly usable and habitable enough at matter-of-fact speeds and on ordinary A-to-B journeys. Even if, in so many ways, it seems almost entirely unutilised at almost any speed you would consider even remotely appropriate to adopt on public roads – like a Le Mans Prototype running under 'full course yellow'.

BUYING & OWNING

★★★☆☆

PROS Has the outlandish performance to back up its price; very fast rapid charging
CONS Sub-200-mile touring range isn't great; the idea of a £2 million, 217mph Lotus will stretch credibility for some

Production of Evija customer cars started in 2024, although it is currently on hold until US president Donald Trump's tariff trade war has played itself out. That's understandable enough when an extra 10% tax on your latest vehicular acquisition could add more than £200,000 to its price.

So, is £2,400,000 after VAT a fair price, at least to the super-rich? It's certainly the going rate: comparable to what Pininfarina asks for a Battista, and close to what Rimac asks for a Nevera. An Aston Martin Valkyrie starts another 'half a bar' higher. You could call that Lotus's attempt at recognising its place in the hypercar-market pecking order if you like.

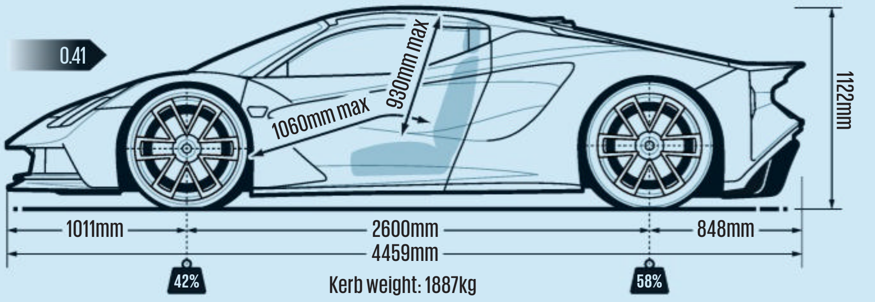
The car is supplied 'ex-works' from the Hethel factory, and as such it is technically the customer's obligation to import and register it, and pay any tax due (although you suspect Lotus can offer third-party help with all of that, too). Like many other cars of its ilk, it's being imported to the US under 'show and display' registration rules.

Those curious about its real-world electric range might be a little disappointed to see that we recorded a touring range of only 191 miles, a figure somewhat adversely affected by Lotus's decision not to include brake energy regeneration on the car. That decision was taken in order to deliver simpler drivability and purer, more reassuring brake pedal progression. Even so, close to 200 miles in this car would feel like plenty, and it's capable of very fast DC rapid charging when needed. Only one other car tested has charged quicker – and that was a Lotus Emeya. ▶

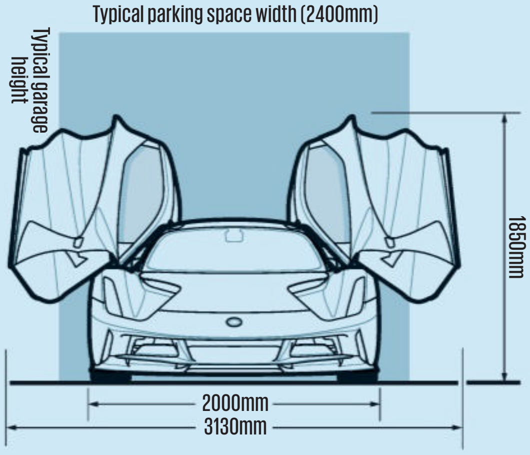
TEST RESULTS

DIMENSIONS

Length 4459mm **Width** 2000mm **Height** 1122mm
Door span 3130mm **Max height to open doors** 1850mm

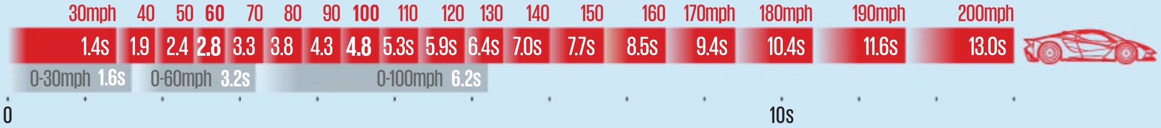


PARKING

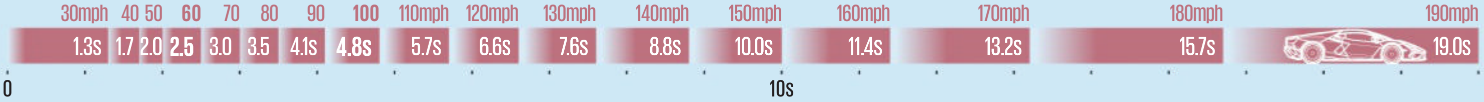


ACCELERATION

Test conditions 27deg C, dry
Standing quarter mile 9.5sec at 171.6mph **Standing km** 16.2sec at 217.4mph **30-70mph** 1.9sec **50-80mph** 1.4sec **0-62mph** 2.9sec

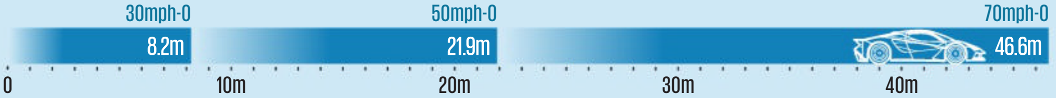


Lamborghini Revuelto (2024, 11deg C, dry)
Standing quarter mile 9.9sec at 149.3mph **Standing km** 17.7sec at 186.6mph **30-70mph** 1.7sec **50-80mph** 1.5sec

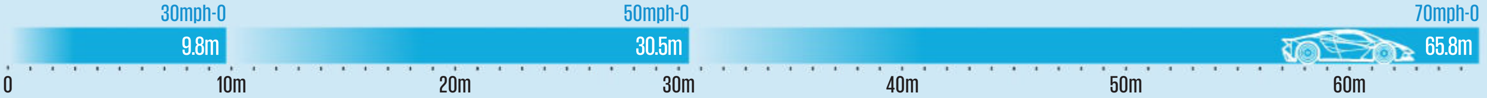


BRAKING

Dry 60-0mph 2.44sec

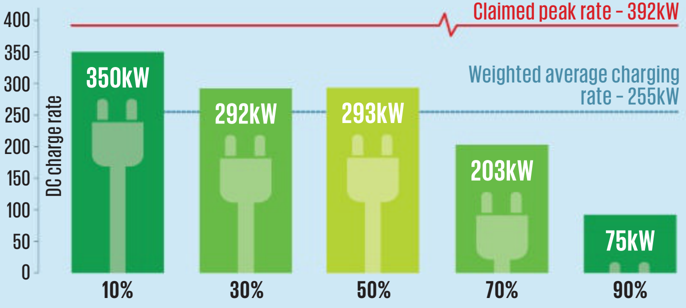


Wet 60-0mph 3.22sec



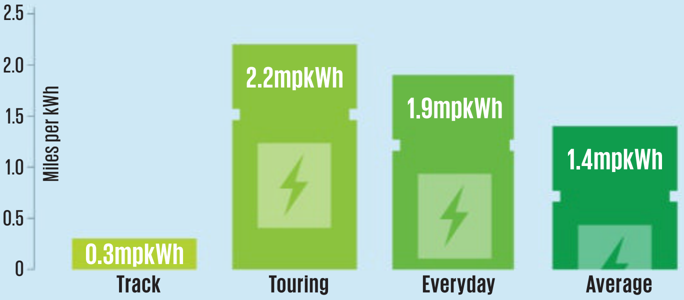
RAPID-CHARGING PERFORMANCE

Charging port location Rear bumper **Charger used** 350kW, ABB HP CP500C, Ionity **AC charging** 22kW

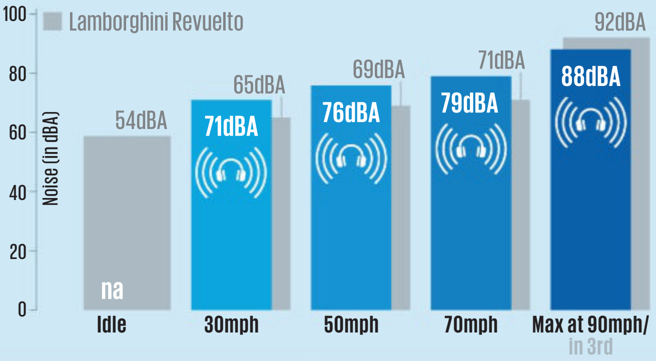


RUNNING EFFICIENCY

WLTP 215 miles, 2.1mpkWh (combined) **Test range** 122/191/165 miles (average/touring/everyday)

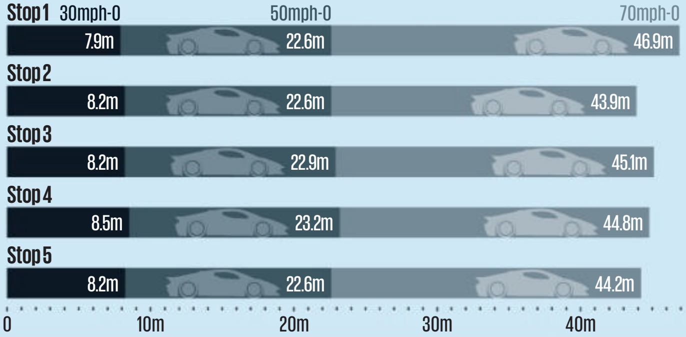


CABIN NOISE



BRAKE FADE RESISTANCE

Fade variance 70-0m – stop 1 vs stop 5: -2.7m



PETER LIDDIARD

THE SMALL PRINT Power-to-weight and torque-to-weight figures are calculated using manufacturer's claimed kerb weight. Running efficiency is tested on a closed test track; 'touring' is representative of UK motorway driving, 'everyday' of intra-urban driving. Acceleration, braking and cabin noise are measured on reference surfaces, for cabin noise using a handheld decibel meter. Charging equipment may vary, but charger power always exceeds the advertised peak draw of the test car, unless stated. Second-row leg room is typical, measured behind a driver's seat set for 1000mm of leg room. © 2025, Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Test results may not be reproduced without editor's written permission.

TESTER'S NOTES

MATT SAUNDERS

To me, the Evija is a bit like the world's most expensive experiment into the state of performance road tyre technology. Because, with everything else primed and in place to bend physics, the car's tyres are made to feel like the final 20th-century piece in a 21st-century jigsaw puzzle. They have to be road-legal, of course, and I don't doubt that they're state-of-the-art. But, somehow, the Evija deserves better.

■ Full-bore acceleration isn't eviscerating, but it is an attack on the senses. If I had been in the passenger seat, and not so engaged with keeping the car tracking straight and picking a braking point, I'd probably have shut my eyes and simply held on.

SPEC ADVICE

The online configurator shows the potential for personalisation. For colour, consider Lotus-typical Ardent Green with Solaris Yellow highlights and pinstripes; matt black and gloss gold 'Origin' magnesium wheels; yellow brake calipers; the grey/black nubuck leather interior; and a yellow 'TDC' marker for your steering wheel.

FACELIFT FIXES

■ Turn the Evija X into a 25-off, track-only 250 version with proper motorsport-grade slicks, and the speed limiter taken off. At least 250mph must be possible.

■ Develop a manual override for torque biasing in the driveline, for that last bit of driver control. It doesn't need to be completely ungoverned, just freer-feeling and more involving.

RANKING RIVALS

1

RIMAC NEVERA

£2,064,000

★★★★☆

The Nevera inherited the legacy of the founding EV hypercar, the Concept One, which got the ball rolling in 2011. The 2021 Nevera pushed peak power well into megawatt territory and is now available in R-badged form, claimed as the fastest-accelerating, and fastest overall, EV in the world. It is heavier than the Evija with a more rounded GT-style dynamic brief, more 'manual' torque-vectoring settings and smaller motors at the front than at the rear. We've driven it on UK roads; fingers crossed a road test will follow.

Engine Four permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 1890bhp
Torque 1726lb ft
Kerb weight 2150kg
0-62mph 1.95sec
Top speed 258mph
Battery 120/106.8kWh (total/usable)
Range 305 miles
Economy 2.1mpkWh

2

LOTUS EVIJA

3

PININFARINA BATTISTA

£2,400,000

★★★★☆

The Italian 'customer Rimac' was actually shown before the Nevera, giving you an idea of the kind of company Rimac wanted to be at the end of the last decade: a powerhouse industry supplier first, a car maker in its own right second. Pininfarina's special coachwork hides the relationship well, but the hardware underneath is identical to the Nevera's, even if the systems tuning is different. Word is that sales have been punishingly slow, perhaps because people want 'the real thing'. But we've driven it on track in Italy and loved it.

Engine Four permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 1879bhp
Torque 1726lb ft
Kerb weight 2227kg
0-62mph 1.86sec
Top speed 217mph (est)
Battery 120/106.8kWh (total/usable)
Range 296 miles
Economy 2.2mpkWh

McMURTRY SPEIRLING PURE

£995,000

How could this pint-sized sensation miss out on any list of ultra-high-performance EVs? Little more than half the weight of the cars listed above, with up to two tonnes of downforce created from a standstill by its fans, the Spéirling is only 3.7m long but is absurdly quick in a 'short-course' sense. It uses only two drive motors, to just reach the 1000bhp barrier. It's not road legal, and so not yet in contention for an Autocar road test. But it's still the fastest thing ever to sprint up the Goodwood Festival of Speed hillclimb.

Engine Two permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 1000bhp
Torque 1740lb ft
Kerb weight 1200kg
0-62mph 1.55sec
Top speed 185mph
Battery 100kWh (total)
Range 300 miles
Economy 3.0mpkWh

TESLA ROADSTER

£250,000 (EST)

Thought the Evija's gestation was long? Tesla, clearly itching to get in on the megawatt EV race, announced the second-generation Roadster back in 2017 – and we have still to see the production version. A little counterintuitively, it's due to be a fixed-head coupé, not a 'roadster' convertible (like the original), and will use three motors, rather than four like the Lotus. Many key vital statistics on it, incredibly, remain unconfirmed – but optional rocket boosters have, somehow, been mooted.

Engine Three electric motors
Power na
Torque na
Kerb weight na
0-60mph 1.9sec
Top speed 250mph (est)
Battery 200kWh (total)
Range 620 miles
Economy na

NIO EP9

£2,500,000

The EP9 became the world's first series-production megawatt EV when it appeared in 2016, although only a handful were intended as road cars. It was developed and built on behalf of Chinese manufacturer Nio by British motorsport engineering company RML, with a carbonfibre chassis designed to LMP regulations. It duly set several searing lap times at various well-known motorsport circuits, including the Nordschleife (where an Evija on slick tyres would later lap 21sec quicker). We have yet to test one.

Engine Four permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 1341bhp
Torque 1091lb ft
Kerb weight 1735kg
0-62mph 2.7sec
Top speed 195mph
Battery 90kWh (total)
Range 265 miles
Economy 2.9mpkWh

VERDICT

Mind-blowingly fast and intense, with some defining digital inhibitions

★★★★☆

Hypercar makers some time back shifted their focus away from top speed as a distinguishing feature. Some have opted for outright circuit pace, but Lotus chose something powerful electric motors could be truly exceptional at: the 0-200mph, standing kilometre drag-strip blast.

In 2011, the Bugatti Veyron cut the standard for that – as verified by this magazine in 1994 with the McLaren F1 – by 21%. In 2025, proportionally speaking, the Evija's leap is twice that size. Four-motor megawatt EVs clearly have their limitations, though – much as it may seem churlish to pick them out on a car that can do what this one can.

The Evija is purposeful to its core, tactile and forthcoming, but managed, inaccessible at times and a little forbidding. It's a landmark experience, but not a landmark driver's car.

LOTUS
AO24 GLV

AUTOCAR READER SURVEY

At Autocar, we are always keen to hear your thoughts and opinions, so please take a few minutes to complete our survey to help us better understand your experience of Autocar, find ways to improve what we do and introduce new features.

Scan the QR code above or visit https://tinyurl.com/35radch2

MATT SAUNDERS

Testing, testing

Evija requires enormous computing power just to handle like a normal car

This week we've given you 10 pages on the incredible Lotus Evija hypercar. Road test number 5763. That should be my new PIN number, because I will certainly never forget it.

Never before, not in 15 years in this job, have I felt high-speed acceleration like it. Never have I needed to have a word with myself in order to simply keep my right foot pinned – all the way to infinity and beyond. I'm not sure Dirk Benedict had that problem when launched out of his mothership in Battlestar Galactica. Either way, the experience must have felt fairly similar.

Here, though, I would like to talk about asymmetrical torque vectoring. I've lost days of my life dreaming about it, but what would it actually mean?

The Evija has four-wheel independent torque vectoring – and what is, I now appreciate, a pretty well-realised system – but it doesn't do any of the trick 'spin on the spot' stuff. Not that I mind. This car has taught me the size of the notional gap between the dynamic potential of this technology and the reality faced by those who just have to make it work.

The problem is that unless you're going to fit any car that happens to have four independent electric motors with as many independent accelerator pedals (go on, wiggle that fourth toe), controlling those motors at times when you would rather they *weren't* so independent is always going to be a challenge. And that, by the way, is a lot of the time.

Take a conventional car, with normal axles front and rear, going around a corner. It's moving at a constant 70mph, yet all four wheels need to spin at slightly different speeds, because each is ascribing a path of a slightly different radius. That wheel speed 'delta' is what a conventional mechanical differential allows for.

"It's almost dumb projectile versus guided missile"

It also delivers something called axle drive equalisation. So now you're cornering quickly enough to transfer weight onto the outside wheels. If they're driving forwards, the inside ones may lose grip and start to spin. But as they do that, the open differential driving them will automatically divert torque to the unloaded side of the car, like a blow-off valve letting pressure out of a closed system. The car itself doesn't suddenly yaw into a slide, as it otherwise might, but stays stable.

Now imagine a much more complex model in which that open diff is constantly correcting for something. Allowing for changes in road camber and steering angle, bump, rebound and surface grip. It's just doing it; you barely know, because it's one of the cleverest passive mechanical systems that a car has.

Now take all that passive equalisation and seamless compensation and consign it to history. Imagine driving a quad-motor EV that sought simply to put equal torque at each wheel. Powerful or not, it would be stubborn, unstable, hyperactive, unpredictable – a mess.

The way that cars like the Evija make up the difference is with a lightning-fast 'chassis brain' that's constantly monitoring wheel speed and constantly reviewing steering angle, 'ground speed', yaw rate, throttle position and/or brake pressure, and then adjusting torque at each motor on the basis of strategies programmed into it, simply to send the car where you intend to go.

It's all computing power. There's no mechanical leg-up; no such thing as default, built-in chassis stability. Compared with a conventional road car running a normal stability control system, it's almost dumb projectile versus guided missile.

It's also clearly not some god-like stability control system that you would ever want to turn off. If the Evija is any guide, the tuning objective is simply to end up with a natural-handling car. One that doesn't feel – on track, at least, and near the limit of grip – like it's driving you. One that is subtle and progressive with its wheel speed 'regulations'; that knows not only what the car is doing and how to keep it on line but also your intentions – your mood, even.

Sounds impossible, doesn't it? Might this, I'm now wondering, be why so many performance brands – Porsche, Polestar, BMW, Hyundai, Kia and others – have generally preferred to combine fewer motors with vectoring diffs in their 'hot' EVs, rather than trying to crack the full four-motor shebang?

Might really good, fully independent torque vectoring just be too damned hard? Or is there simply too much potential to know what the hell to do for the best?

50 BEST USED CARS

There's something for everyone in our top 50 list, says JOHN EVANS

We Brits like used cars. More than 7.6 million were sold last year, outstripping new ones by four to one. The top 10 sellers form a fail-safe selection that ticks most of the important boxes, notably those marked 'value for money' and 'reasonable ownership costs'. A few of them have found their way into our 50 best used cars selection – but only a few. Used car buyers are a hard bunch to please, so we've thrown our net wider. See if there's something in it that catches your eye.

FORD MUSTANG 2015-2023

Used price range £15,000-£48,000

Good-value dose of Americana comes with a wallet-friendly 2.3T Ecoboost engine or, our choice, a full-fat 5.0-litre V8. Check interior, paintwork and parking dings.

We found Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT Fastback, 2019/69, 28,000 miles, £35,000

FORD FOCUS ST 2019-

Used price range £14,500-£30,000

More fun and better value than a VW Golf GTI Mk8. Loads for sale, but beware paying too much for a late-plate car and be sure the service history is up to date.

We found Ford Focus 2.3 ST, 2023/23, 26,000 miles, £24,750

PERFORMANCE

Hot hatches, coupés, muscle cars – all of them quick

BMW M2 2015-2021

Used price range £20,000-£45,000

New, it was the most affordable M car, and used ones are now VW Golf R Mk7 money. Compact but practical and a blast to drive. Full service history essential, and check brake and tyre life.

We found BMW M2, 2017/17, 68,000 miles, £22,995

JAGUAR F-TYPE 2014-2024

Used price range £18,000-£65,000

Dynamically outclassed by most rivals but better looking than all of them. The V8 is heroic, the 2.0-litre is efficient but the V6 S is the sweet spot. Check software glitches, panel alignment and rear diff for leaks.

We found Jaguar F-Type 3.0 V6 S auto, 2015/15, 50,000 miles, £25,000

OUR PICK

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R 2014-2020

Used price range £9000-£24,000

Not much more expensive than a GTI but more fun, more of the time. Five doors and DSG dual-clutch auto 'box is the best combination, although purists will want the rare manual. Electrical faults and high oil consumption plague some cars.

We found VW Golf R 2.0 DSG, 2019/19, 62,000 miles, £19,795

OFF-ROADERS

Five great-value motors that love an adventure

DACIA DUSTER 4x4 2018-2023

Used price range £8000-£17,000
Rare, four-wheel-drive Duster is worth seeking out. For off-roading, lock it in four-wheel drive and let the traction system take control. How do they make it so reliable for the money? Just be happy that they do.
We found Dacia Duster 1.5 dCi 150 Prestige 4WD, 2019/19, 40,000 miles, £12,000

SUZUKI JIMNY 1998-2017

Used price range £2500-£16,000
Anyone who has hired an old-model Jimny on holiday will know just how tough and capable they are. Values were in the doldrums until its trendy but comically expensive successor hauled them up. So thanks for that… Avoid the fragile soft-top.
We found Suzuki Jimny 1.3 VVT SZ4 4WD, 2015/65, 57,000 miles, £13,995

OUR PICK

LAND ROVER DEFENDER 90 2020-

Used price range £38,000-£95,000
A 110 is more practical but, thanks to its shorter wheelbase, the 90 is better for off-roading. The forums suggest any problems are mostly software-related. Buy an approved used example for the warranty.
We found Land Rover Defender 3.0 D250 S, 2021/21, 30,000 miles, £41,995

TOYOTA LAND CRUISER 2010-2023

Used price range £13,500-£55,000
Not the cheapest off-roader but the only one you'd take across the desert. Basic cabin and rudimentary on the road, but selling it on won't be an issue.
We found Toyota Land Cruiser 3.0 D-4D Invincible auto, 2015/65, 65,000 miles, £28,000

JEEP WRANGLER

2007-2018

Used price range
£13,000-£30,000
Poor on-road manners aren't unlike the classic Defender's, but the off-road ability is exceptional. Best mud-plugger in the range is the Rubicon, but it's rare so strike out for a 2.8 CRD Sahara. Beware 'death wobble' steering and leaky differentials.
We found Jeep Wrangler 2.8 CRD Sahara auto 2dr, 2015/65, 26,000 miles, £23,990

VALUE FOR MONEY

If you want your cash to go further, this quintet deliver great deals

FORD FIESTA 2017-2024

Used price range £2500-£21,000
From runabout to hot hatch, there's a Fiesta for every pocket. The driving experience and equipment levels are spot on, but packaging and overall quality are less impressive. A service record proving regular oil changes is essential.
We found Ford Fiesta 1.0 Ecoboost Zetec, 2019/19, 35,000 miles, £9500

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF 2013-2020

Used price range £2000-£40,000
Not the current generation, note, but its predecessor, which is much easier to recommend for its greater reliability and smoother infotainment system. Diesels are bombproof, but the sweet spots are 1.4 and 1.5-litre petrols. Check that the adaptive cruise control works and the service history has no yawning gaps.
We found VW Golf 1.4 TSI 5dr Match, 2015/65, 30,000 miles, £11,500

FORD FOCUS 2018-

Used price range £4000-£42,000
Not Golf quality, but a better car in terms of the driving experience. It's roomier, too. Avoid daily rentals and similar hard-used hacks. With giveaway deals on new cars as the model winds down, beware paying strong money for a nearly new example. Solid service history is a must.
We found Ford Focus 1.0T Ecoboost MHEV 125 5dr ST-Line X Edition, 2021/71, 18,000 miles, £16,000

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING USED CARS IN 2024

Model	Sales
Ford Fiesta	306,207
Vauxhall Corsa	252,761
Volkswagen Golf	231,440
Ford Focus	228,220
Mini hatchback	160,516
Vauxhall Astra	159,495
BMW 3 Series	158,674
Volkswagen Polo	151,786
Nissan Qashqai	138,810
BMW 1 Series	125,440

SKODA OCTAVIA 2013-2020

Used price range £2000-£20,000
A genuinely roomy cabin, excellent reliability and a good range of engines, all for sub-VW money, although low-spec models can feel a bit basic. The 1.4/1.5 petrol is the pick.
We found Skoda Octavia 1.5 TSI 5dr SE L, 2018/18, 50,000 miles, £10,795

BMW 1 SERIES 2019-2024

Used price range £10,000-£45,000
Value for money and a premium badge don't have to be mutually exclusive, as this 1 Series proves. The 1.5-litre petrols are well priced at five years and still feel tight. Make sure brakes and tyres have lots of life.
We found BMW 1.5 118i M Sport DCT, 2020/69, 20,000 miles, £19,995

OUR PICK

SUVs

High-riding machines remain hugely popular and there's plenty of choice

BMW X3 2018-2024

Used price range £16,000-£59,000
The X3 is roomy, fun to drive, well built and well equipped. The 2.0-litre diesel engine is exceptional. Check for infotainment issues and consider getting an extended warranty and a 0% interest service plan.
We found BMW X3 xDrive 2.0d M Sport auto, 2019/19, 50,000 miles, £22,500

KIA SPORTAGE 2016-2021

Used price range £5000-£23,000
Even a 2019 Sportage should have 12 months' cover on its seven-year warranty. Other draws are a spacious cabin and wide range of engines.
We found Kia Sportage 1.6 GDi 2, 2020/69, 45,000 miles, £12,750

OUR PICK

SKODA KODIAQ 2017-2024

Used price range £9000-£45,000
Skoda's first large seven-seat SUV was a hit straight out of the box, and used it's a downright bargain. Skoda reliability is good, too, so no concerns there.
We found Skoda Kodiaq 1.5 TSI SE, 2022/22, 30,000 miles, £19,000

DACIA DUSTER 2018-2023

Used price range £5000-£18,000
We've already examined the Duster in four-wheel-drive form, so here we're looking at the two-wheel-drive options only, which opens up greater choice. Entry-level versions are basic, so aim for mid-range. The 1.3 petrol is the best engine and impressively reliable.
We found Dacia Duster 1.3 TCe 130 Comfort, 2020/70, 36,000 miles, £11,150

FORD PUMA 2019-

Used price range £8500-£30,000
We named the Puma Britain's best-value used car last year, but it couldn't be in two categories, so here it is shaming rivals. Shapely, roomy, fun to drive and economical but, as with the Focus, dealers are frantically discounting new ones so beware paying too much for a late car.
We found Ford Puma 1.0 Ecoboost MHEV ST-Line, 21,000 miles, 2023/23, £15,000

SLEEPERS

Surprise – and even shame – your fellow drivers with a wolf in sheep's clothing

JAGUAR XE S 2015-2017

Used price range £14,000-£20,000
This discreet Jag puts out 335bhp from its 3.0-litre V6. Other attractions include sports suspension and Meridian premium audio. There's a bodykit too, apparently, but we're darned if we can see it.
We found Jaguar XE 3.0 S, 2016/16, 42,000 miles, £14,990

AUDI S6 2012-2018

Used price range £14,000-£23,000
Much more plentiful than its hallowed but rare 5.2 V10 predecessor. The twin-turbo engine packs 414bhp, while four-wheel drive and air suspension keep things planted and comfortable. Have a repair fund.
We found Audi S6 4.0 V8 S Tronic Quattro, 2016/66, 50,000 miles, £22,500

TESLA MODEL S P100D 2016-2019

Used price range £21,500-£35,000
Looking not unlike the regular 100D but capable of almost halving that car's 0-62mph sprint to a supercar-crushing 2.4sec, the P100D is the ultimate sleeper. New it cost £133,000, so £110,000 saved by buying an early one is worth waking up for. Check panel fit and finish, door locks, software updates, tyres, battery life…
We found Tesla Model S P100D, 2019/19, 45,000 miles, £34,000

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R ESTATE 2015-2020

Used price range £9500-£25,000
The sensible driver's R is no less lairy than its hatchback sibling, but while that car, too, is something of a sleeper, the estate looks positively comatose. Stuff a wardrobe in the back and it could be a 1.6 TDI on the tip run.
We found Volkswagen Golf 2.0 R DSG, 2018/18, 65,000 miles, £17,500

BMW 535D M SPORT 2010-2016

Price range £7000-£17,000
Yes, it's an old diesel, but it's a good one with 295bhp and 442lb ft from its 3.0-litre engine, while an M Sport pack brings tweaked suspension and a discreet bodykit. Look for exhaust smoke – and don't even think about driving it in London.
We found BMW 535d M Sport auto, 2014/64, 75,000 miles, £11,995

WILD CARS
Done with playing safe? Then consider one of these outliers

ABARTH 595 2009-2022

Used price range £3000-£20,000
Few cheapies can paint a smile on your face quite so wide as Abarth's sporty take on the Fiat 500. Navigate the special editions with care: some spoil the model's inherent – and essential – charm.
We found Fiat 595 1.4 T-Jet Euro, 2016/66, 48,000 miles, £8250

BMW i3 2013-2022

Used price range £4500-£20,000
Its range may be laughably small by today's standards, but from its striking exterior and interior to its performance and driving manners, the i3 still makes a good used buy. Make sure the air-conditioning system is in good health, the brakes aren't rusty and it has the optional CCS charging port.
We found BMW i3, 2020/70, 24,000 miles, £11,999

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE CONVERTIBLE 2016-2018

Used price range £11,000-£20,000
The roofless Evoque still commands a premium over regular versions. Being seen is what it's all about, and on that measure the soft-top Evoque still turns heads even nine years on. Check the condition of the hood and that there are no DPF issues (most are diesels).
We found Range Rover Evoque 2.0 TD4 HSE Dynamic auto, 2017/17, 44,000 miles, £16,999

OUR PICK

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT 2004-2011

Used price range £10,000-£35,000
Buying a Conti is the easy part; it's the bills that hurt. You already know what a great car it is, so instead we'll only say buy one with a full service history and a good-quality warranty – and get it from a reputable dealer.
We found Bentley Continental 6.0 GT, 2004/04, 58,000 miles, £19,250

MINI COUPE 2011-2015

Used price range £1500-£8000
This short-lived variation on a theme is worth a second look thanks to its crisp handling, lively performance and low prices. Visibility is poor, it's noisy and if you think the hatch is cramped… The JCW version is a hoot, but save that for the hatch.
We found Mini Coupé 1.6 Cooper S, 2015/15, 44,000 miles, £6500

KEEPERS

Changing cars is expensive, but buy one of these and you won't have to

SKODA SUPERB ESTATE 2015-2024

Used price range £3000-£30,000
Simply being one of the biggest estate cars on the market should guarantee the Superb keeper status but, fortunately, it has more strings to its bow. It's well built, good to drive and, being a Skoda, reliable.
We found Skoda Superb 2.0 TDI 150 SE L, 2020/70, 31,000 miles, £19,250

TOYOTA COROLLA 2019-

OUR PICK

Used price range £9500-£30,000
All generations of Corolla have a great reliability record, but we've chosen the current one for its freshness and brilliance. There's 1.2-litre power, but most are efficient 1.8 or 2.0-litre hybrids. Check that the brakes and gearbox are in good health.
We found Toyota Corolla 1.8 VVT-i Icon Tech, 2022/22, 30,000 miles, £15,250

DACIA SANDERO 2021-

Used price range £5500-£16,000
The first Sandero we got majored on price. So does this, its successor, but it's now a car that holds its own against costlier rivals. Thanks to its sharper styling, it also looks like one you've chosen for reasons other than penury.
We found Dacia Sandero 1.0 TCe Bi-Fuel Comfort, 2022/72, 31,000 miles, £9750

SUZUKI VITARA 2015-

Used price range £3000- £28,000
The unpretentious Vitara comes with a wide choice of engines and in two- or four-wheel drive. It's also spacious, good to drive and well equipped. Add excellent reliability and you and your Vitara will be joined at the hip.
We found Suzuki Vitara 1.6 SZ-T, 2018-18, 34,000 miles, £10,500

BMW 520i 2017-2023

Used price range £10,000-£30,000
We accept that even if it were 100% reliable, a 5 Series' maintenance costs will rise as the car ages. But good keepers can't all be bread and water, and this BMW's premium feel and performance will sustain you long past its 10th year and when those bills start to bite.
We found BMW 520i M Sport auto, 2020/69, 32,000 miles, £18,250

FUN CARS

Five warm hatches that won't break the bank

MAZDA MX-5 2015-

Used price range £7500-£24,000
Lighter than the 2.0-litre model and with a zingier engine, the 1.5-litre version of the MX-5 feels that bit more authentic. It's certainly cheaper, which matters when prices, especially of late-plate 2.0-litre examples, are so high. Reliability is excellent, too.
We found Mazda MX-5 1.5 Sport Nav, 2017/17, 60,000 miles, £8000

MINI COOPER HATCH 2014-2024

Used price range £8000-£28,000
The Mini may have its problems (the engine feels lumpy at low revs, the ride is awful on sports suspension and most late cars are automatics, which pushes up the price), but it's a hoot to hustle through corners. Build quality and reliability are also excellent.
We found Mini Cooper 1.5 3dr Exclusive auto, 2023/23, 23,000 miles, £20,500

VOLKSWAGEN UP GTI 2017-2023

Used price range £10,000-£17,000
Around £14,000 will buy a tidy, 2017-reg Golf GTI 5dr with 65,000 miles, so why opt for its much smaller and less rounded relative? Good question – except that probing the handling and performance limits of a small car such as the Up can be more fun than something more powerful.
We found Volkswagen Up GTI 3dr, 2020/70, 25,000 miles, £13,999

SUZUKI SWIFT SPORT 2017-2023

Used price range £9500-£19,000
The second-generation 1.6-litre naturally aspirated model was laugh-out-loud brilliant and is still worth a punt. The Mk3 is no less fun thanks to its light weight, responsive turbo engine and communicative steering.
We found Suzuki Swift Sport 1.4 Turbo, 2023/73, 13,000 miles, £16,999

FORD FIESTA ST 2018-2024

OUR PICK

Used price range £8500-£21,000
Grippy chassis, quick gearshift, spirited performance – they're all present and correct in this little marvel. The ST-3 version is the pick for its heated seats and automatic headlights. Check for body repairs, regular services (essential to keep the Ecoboost engine sweet) and worn brakes.
We found Ford Fiesta ST 1.5T Ecoboost 5dr ST-3, 2020/70, 22,000 miles, £16,000

PEOPLE CARRIERS

If you have a family to move, look no further

CITROEN GRAND C4 SPACETOURER 2018-2022

Used price range £7500-£20,000
Citroën's big Space Tourer is one of the better-looking people movers, and it's reasonably versatile. Visibility is another strong point, as is the comfortable ride.
We found Citroën Grand C4 Space Tourer 1.5 BlueHDi Feel, 2019/19, 50,000 miles, £10,995

SEAT ALHAMBRA 2011-2020

Used price range £3500-£21,000
Not as roomy as the Ford Galaxy, the Alhambra is nevertheless a genuine seven-seater with the added attraction of sliding side doors. It has a good reliability record, too, so worry more about interior condition and car park damage.
We found Seat Alhambra 2.0 TDI 150 S DSG, 2019/19, 49,000 miles, £14,895

VOLKSWAGEN TOURAN 2015-

Used price range £5500-£35,000
The Touran makes the most of its modest space by being one of the most versatile MPVs you can buy. It looks and feels classy, and it drives well. We know of one family-owned Touran with a six-figure mileage and an unblemished reliability record.
We found VW Touran 1.5 TSI 150 SEL DSG, 2020/70, 50,000 miles, £17,750

DACIA JOGGER 2022-

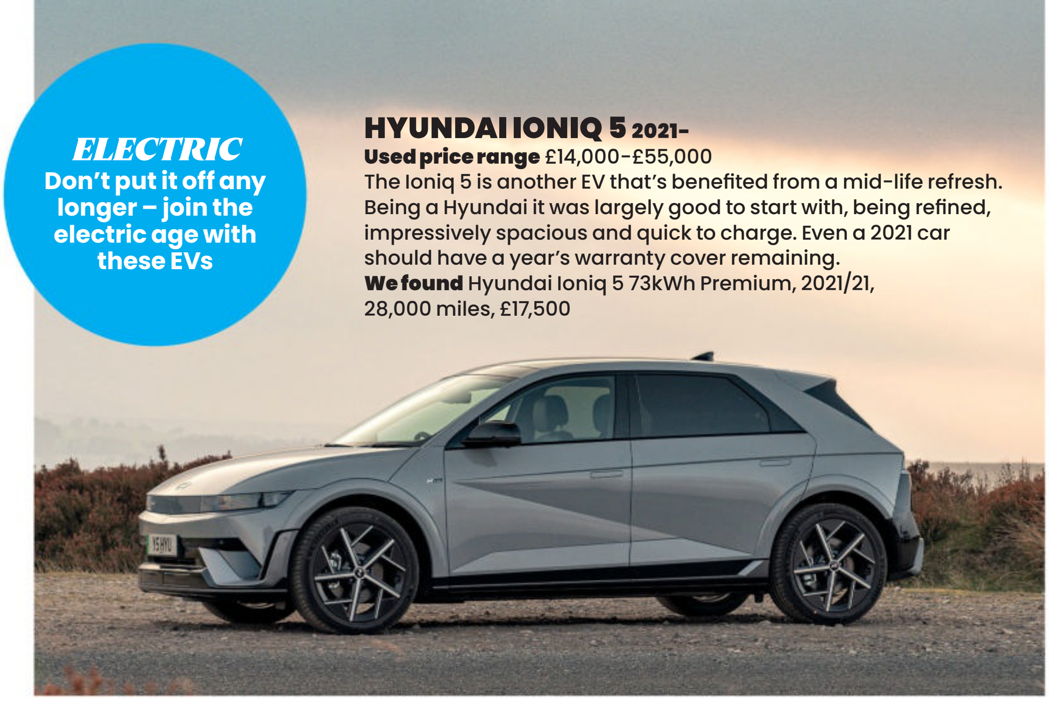
Used price range £10,000-£25,000
Nearly new, the Jogger is temptingly priced, but at three years old it's a steal. There's decent space for seven or, to boost luggage room, the rear pair of seats can be removed. It's proving reliable, too.
We found Dacia Jogger 1.0 TCe 110 Expression, 2022/22, 15,000 miles, £14,500

FORD GALAXY 2015-2023

Used price range £2000-£28,000
The Galaxy is good to drive and there are plenty on the used market, but demand from taxi firms means late, low-mileage examples can be expensive. If you're looking at older ones, be wary of clocked and superficially smartened-up taxi hacks and family buses.
We found Ford Galaxy 2.0 diesel EcoBlue 150 Zetec, 2019/69, 40,000 miles, £16,500

ELECTRIC

Don't put it off any longer – join the electric age with these EVs



HYUNDAI IONIQ 5 2021-

Used price range £14,000-£55,000
The Ioniq 5 is another EV that's benefited from a mid-life refresh. Being a Hyundai it was largely good to start with, being refined, impressively spacious and quick to charge. Even a 2021 car should have a year's warranty cover remaining.
We found Hyundai Ioniq 5 73kWh Premium, 2021/21, 28,000 miles, £17,500

HOW TO BUY A USED CAR, WELL

- If you can afford to, buy the facelift model for its better tech and efficiency, especially so on EVs.
- EVs registered after 1 April with a list price with options of more than £40,000 now attract luxury car tax from their second year. Remember if considering a pre-reg one.
- If buying nearly new, check you can't get a better deal buying brand new.
- Check the car hasn't been clocked by running its details through a vehicle data company and by researching the mileages on the car's online MOT record.
- Scrutinise workshop invoices for proof of regular servicing and what was done. If possible, test drive it on familiar roads.
- Compile a mechanical, cosmetic and test drive checklist – and follow it religiously.

TESLA MODEL 3 2019-

Used price range £10,000-£45,000
The Model 3 is still impressive and the recent facelift was worthwhile but, like all Teslas, its ace card is the manufacturer's excellent Supercharger network. Check panel fit and finish and for infotainment and sensor glitches.
We found Tesla Model 3 Standard Range Plus, 2020/20, 24,000 miles, £16,250

VOLKSWAGEN ID 3 2020-

Used price range £8500-£36,000
EVs are still a learning curve for car makers, and the ID 3's 2023 facelift has brought real quality and user-experience improvements. Otherwise, at all years it's good to drive and spacious, and it promises a decent range.
We found Volkswagen ID 3 Pro Performance 58kWh Life, 2023/72, 13,000 miles, £15,995

HONDA E 2020-2024

Used price range £10,500-£18,500
If you're a low-mileage driver with a home charger looking for a funky used EV that's also well made, an E is worth a look. The driving position is first-rate, the handling is tidy and its 35.5kWh battery doesn't take long to charge.
We found Honda E Advance, 2020/20, 21,000 miles, £12,990

OUR PICK

SKODA ENYAQ 2021-

Used price range £13,500-£45,000
Skoda's Enyaq SUV proves that with a good range and charging system even busy families can make an electric car fit their lives. As with all EVs, get a battery health report, inspect the condition of the brakes and check the tyres are EV-specific.
We found Skoda Enyaq 60 Nav Suite, 2023/23, 27,000 miles, £19,990

HE'S GOT THE LOOK

BMW has tasked Max Missoni with shaping the firm's future beyond the imminent Neue Klasse era. **STEVE CROPLEY** asks how he intends to do it

Max Missoni, the award-winning Polestar design boss who joined BMW late last year, has spent much of the past seven months in his new role learning about the Bavarian company's unique procedures and "beautiful past" as a way of creating a range of middle- and upper-echelon models on which the future depends beyond 2035.

Having come recently from a smallish, Scandinavia-based start-up with no historical back story at all (and mainstream Volkswagen before that), Missoni is now tasked with making best use of BMW's powerful heritage to create a future range of premium cars whose launch is still a decade away, well beyond that of the impending Neue Klasse line-up that will soon start rolling out of factories.

However, in order to keep a foothold in the contemporary scene, Missoni is also taking charge of design at Alpina, the formerly semi-detached performance marque that BMW agreed to bring in-house in 2022.

Austrian-born, Royal College of Art-trained Missoni, 45, is now one of a refreshed 'cabinet' of design bosses assembled by Munich's overall design chief, Adrian van Hooydonk. Missoni takes charge of BMW designs from 3 Series upwards, and Alpina's model sizes are likely to fall into the same classes. He will work beside Domagoj Dukec at Rolls-Royce, Oliver Heilmer doing mid-size and M cars and Holger Hampf at Mini. It will be mostly Missoni's purely-BMW creations, therefore, on which the company's future reputation will be built.

Missoni has no illusions about the vital importance of the brand's history and reputation. "Even before I joined," he says, "I deeply respected the way BMW has been able to reinvent itself at times, never losing the essence of its values. It takes courage to innovate while staying true to your heritage; not many can do it. That's one reason I was so keen to join."

Which begs an instant opening question: should we associate Missoni's arrival with a rule-busting era of reinvention, a new-era version of Chris Bangle's controversial tenure? Not at all, insists the designer. "I hope there will be depth and quality in what I do," he says, "but I'm here to add value more than to provoke."

Neue Klasse saloon will bridge the gap to Missoni's future direction for BMW

> ***"It takes courage to innovate while staying true to your heritage"***

The Alpina part of his job will yield results "soon", asserts Missoni, although extra details are scarce for now, not least because while the designer and I chat virtually, we have the help of not one but two off-screen 'minders', one either side of the Channel. "The brand now sits within BMW," says the designer, "so it's only to be expected that we'll want to present our first thoughts soon. We're working on that, and I'm confident we'll have exciting things to show."

Missoni doesn't seem too keen on my suggestion that one reason for Alpina's acquisition is because in the electrification era the tuning house's celebrated 'engineering stuff', the unique engine sounds and responses that have made its cars distinct from regular BMWs, must be replaced by something else – ▸

Polestar 极星 4
Missoni is credited with shaping Polestar's pure Scandinavian design

WHEN I GRILLED CHRIS BANGLE

"Chris was head of design at BMW and he came to lecture us at the RCA," recalls Missoni. "It was during a very controversial period in his career. As students we were very critical, and we agreed we'd grill the guy. But something quite different happened: we walked away convinced that what he was doing was exactly how it should be done. There was a fascinating shift in our perception in this one meeting. Afterwards we asked ourselves: how did that happen?"

Missoni says the Bangle controversy faded after a while, but from the encounter his student group learned important lessons: mainly that a good story and a thoroughly researched plan can move mountains.

"You need a good foundation," he says, "before you get into creating a shape."

◂ perhaps a new, special look.

"We always hope to do something special with design," he says, slightly riled. "Design isn't compensation for the lack of something else. It should always be excellent. We'll give the Alpina brand a nice, holistic launch soon, where it's all explained. You just have to wait a bit longer."

Turning to the large cars that are his most important remit, Missoni hits his stride. He is well aware of the depth of the big-car competition from other highly competent brands, and he notes a tendency among the traditional rivals, the European firms, to move further into luxury.

"I think that's right," he says. "We're already seeing the democratisation of luxury across many brands through feature content. That's happening in China, too. But I believe true luxury is becoming more and more a matter of storytelling and an understanding that heritage is something that builds trust over decades. I think we are only seeing the beginning of a renaissance of those values."

The holy grail, of course, is to produce periodically cars that become icons, and BMW has a rich history of doing exactly that. Knowing what he now does of the company's history, Missoni reckons he has isolated an important element of the recipe. I wonder if the original Neue Klasse saloon fits the bill, noting my own feelings of relief that BMW has been able to restate so effectively its own design values for the modern era.

"The cars people remember as classics come most often when the two main elements – design and technology – work well together. It's rare for true classics to come at the very end of a run of incremental designs. There has to be good reason for things to become iconic. Our job as designers is to be 'pre-thinkers', to propose new formats or dimensions and seek the technology to fill the void. If it's there, we have the circumstances to create an icon."

There is a strong case for the Neue Klasse cars, at least some of them, to be BMW classics, Missoni feels. "The car brings a big refocus on the essence of the brand," he says. "At the same time it has an entirely new powertrain. The car's proportions are very much driven by electrification, but at the same time the design focuses back on what BMW is all about. Maybe that's what gave you your feeling of relief."

When he discusses his role in simplifying BMW's cars, aimed at dates well beyond 2030, Missoni shows how clearly a senior car designer's job is as much about philosophy as creativity.

"In the past there was a level of simplicity in cars," he says. "You didn't have everything you wanted, but it was easy to find what you did have. That gave the user a sense of fulfilment. For a while now we've been seeing extra complexity. Software allows us to adjust so many functions in a car that we might as well do it, because it will probably improve a user's personal experience once they know how to do it.

"What I find so interesting is that artificial intelligence is coming to provide a layer between the deep complexity of the internal systems and our need for a minimalistic interface. That AI layer will know what you want because it can predict your behaviour. You won't have to understand the system, but the system will help you anyway. That's a very nice way to deliver the simplicity you want, plus the depth of modern options you might enjoy."

Missoni previewed Volvo's new design direction with the 2013 Concept Coupé

Missoni with Polestar design colleagues Juan Pablo Bernal (centre) and Nahum Escobedo

> ***"Design isn't compensation for the lack of something else. It should always be excellent"***

Alpina, now an in-house BMW concern, also falls under Missoni's remit

Missoni was brought up in a home stuffed full of modern design thinking: both of his parents were architects. His early interest was in boat design, which he acknowledges is a little odd for a teenager with no access to the sea. It was in a boat magazine he spotted a Pininfarina advertisement featuring a 1989 Ferrari concept called Mythos, and he realised that you could have a career creating modern designs that moved. Cars were bigger in the lives of most people than boats, and that is still their appeal, he says, even if boating remains his hobby.

Missoni was an undergraduate in Linz, then moved to London's Royal College of Art for postgraduate car design study, working initially at Volkswagen in Wolfsburg where he soon took the lead role in designing the challenging, futuristic and ultra-rare Volkswagen XL1 efficiency concept, revealed in 2015 (see below).

That car, and Missoni's subsequent well-received Volvo and Polestar designs, credited with capturing expertly the essence of Scandinavian design, won him a reputation as a designer who knew much about minimalism and refinement in modern cars. Those are the words most often used to describe his work.

However, since the Polestar years, which began in 2018, Missoni prefers to talk about purity as an ideal design objective. "I prefer 'purity'," he says, "because 'minimalism' tends to suggest things being left out or stripped away, and that's not the case. When I talk about predictive design for the future, the idea is we will be able to give you what you want when you want it, but you won't lack anything. That's minimalist, but in the truest sense of the word it's not." Welcome to the world of the car designer.

Concept XC Coupé, another from Missoni's portfolio, previewed second-gen XC90

Missoni designed VW's groundbreaking XL1 efficiency concept

DESIGNING THE VW XL1

Missoni attributes part of his success at creating VW's celebrated XL1 'one-litre car' (the goal was for it to travel 100km on one litre of fuel) to the influence of certain low, long-wheelbase Citroën designs. One of those, the BX, was designed by an enduring design hero of his, Marcello Gandini, who also did the Lamborghini Countach. "He always looked for the pure essence of the thing before he added anything," says Missoni.

At the time, explains Missoni, the XL1 was such a niche job in an organisation as huge as VW that no one really saw it as a design opportunity. "I thought, of course, this car has the opportunity to communicate very low fuel consumption and an excellent range," he says. "Those Citroëns had dealt very well with things like a long wheelbase, covered wheels and aerodynamic shapes. It was an opportunity to go above and beyond."

LIVING WITH A...

Where our long-term test cars have been and what they've done

> "It inspires similar reliance and reverence as my 25-year-old Black & Decker Workmate"

FINAL REPORT **MILEAGE 44,593**

TESLA MODEL 3

Four years on, has the one-time EV pace-setter still got it? We reveal all

WHY WE RAN IT To find out if an approved used car is the best route into Tesla ownership

I will admit to having had reservations about Tesla, and in particular the company's owner, so it was hard not to embark on Model 3 ownership without some negative preconceptions. But it's fair to say the car has comprehensively won me over, even if I have a few lingering doubts over its parentage.

After several months together, I've come to the conclusion that the Model 3 is an excellent appliance. If that sounds negative, it's not meant to: it inspires similar reliance and reverence as my unfailing Bosch dishwasher, 25-year-old Black & Decker Workmate and DeWalt drill, because it makes life easier.

The technology is initially overwhelming but swiftly becomes something you rely on: get into another car and you find yourself wondering why you have to unlock the doors, turn on the ignition, adjust your seat or connect your devices – or even steer, accelerate and brake, should you use Tesla's Enhanced Autopilot system (I prefer to stick to adaptive cruise control, which at least leaves me with the sense that I have an influence over my own destiny).

But the element of Tesla ownership that makes life easiest isn't the car at all: it's the supporting infrastructure. Tesla has ensured that its customers won't suffer the frustrations that most EV users do on a long journey by having more – and better – chargers than anyone else. There are now more than 1800 in the UK, and when you plan your route, the car's navigation system automatically tells you when and where to stop, with minimal disruption to your journey, as well as how long you will need to charge for and how much it will cost (usually less than from rival charging providers).

When I got my Model 3, I asked whether a used Tesla would make the most of these advantages in the same way as a new one, both in terms of range and software integration. The answer is an emphatic yes.

Initially, I wondered whether all of that wizardry was there to blind me to the Model 3's shortcomings, but in reality they are relatively few. I can't help wishing it were the hatchback that its shape implies, but it's still eminently practical – aided by the rear seats dropping down (although the seatbelt warning chimes if you put a heavy load on the folded seatbacks).

SECOND OPINION

I find the ride a little bit unsettled, but the Tesla is otherwise pretty comfortable and surprisingly spacious. Even four years on, the technology is still amazing, too. The way the navigation system integrates your route planning with charging stops is very impressive. **ME**

In addition to overall capacity, storage for everyday essentials is excellent: there's a deep well in the boot for charging cables and more, plus up front there are large cubbies for the essentials of family life. That said, the fact that you have to go into a sub-menu on the touchscreen to open the glovebox is infuriating.

Clements soon got used to – and came to like – the minimalist cabin

Holiday trip from London to the Scottish Highlands proved anxiety-free

Model 3 is quick, clever and comfortable, just not very communicative

The technology in what is now a four-year-old car continues to be cutting-edge, aided by regular over-the-air software updates, that touchscreen impressing both with the insights it can give when you're driving and the entertainment available when you're not.

I'd like to have had a head-up display, because the speed readout isn't easy to see at a glance, but otherwise the controls (both on board and in the Tesla phone app) are hard to fault and the climate control (with automatic heated seats and steering wheel) is intuitive and effective.

It's telling that I've got this far without talking about what the Model 3 is like to drive, because it's hard to define. It's comfortable over long distances, despite a firm ride, and devastatingly rapid cross-country, with 346bhp of instant punch combined with a low centre of gravity, swift turn-in and plenty of grip. Yet it's difficult to forge any kind of emotional bond with, there being little in the way of feel and feedback through either the wheel or the seat.

I've found that in most conditions I barely scratch the surface of its performance, preferring to pop it in less aggressive Chill driving mode rather than seeking out opportunities to go for a blast as I might in, say, a BMW 3 Series.

The range has improved as we have transitioned from late winter to mid-summer, and across a full year I'd expect better than my 3.8mpkWh average. If ultimate distance is your ambition, it might be worth tracking down a single-motor car; reader Fred Reschen reports that he gets 5mpkWh on longer journeys in his Long Range RWD.

Fred has also been impressed by his car's build quality – something I'd had concerns about following warnings from bar-room pundits. In truth, my Model 3 has never looked or felt like a 'used' car: it feels as well screwed together as any other premium saloon. But it isn't a new car, and I spent more on maintenance – new tyres, new wipers and an MOT test (which it strolled through with no advisories) – than I did on charging, although that would balance out long term.

The fact that there has been little deterioration in battery life is reassuring, and Tesla has now sold more than 250,000 cars in the UK, which means a healthy used buyer's market. Add in the fact that my car represents a saving of nearly 50% over its new equivalent – which, facelift aside, is essentially the same – and it's a compelling package.

As for my feelings about Elon Musk, I guess I could always buy a bumper sticker…

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TEST DATA

TESLA MODEL 3 LONG RANGE ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

MILEAGE

At start 37,771

At end 44,593

PRICES

List price new £49,935 (in 2021)

List price now £49,990

Price as tested £28,000

OPTIONS

Enhanced Autopilot £3400, Midnight Silver metallic paint £1000, 19in silver sports wheels £1450 (prices all in 2021)

ECONOMY AND RANGE

Claimed range 360 miles

Battery 82/75kWh (total/usable)

Test average 3.8mpkWh

Test best 4.3mpkWh

Test worst 3.4mpkWh

Real-world range 285 miles

Max charge rate 250kW

TECH HIGHLIGHTS

0-62mph 4.2sec

Top speed 145mph

Engine Permanent magnet synchronous motor (r), asynchronous motor (f)

Max power 346bhp

Max torque 299lb ft

Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, 4WD

Boot 425 litres

Wheels 8.5Jx19in, alloy

Tyres 235/40 R19, Hankook Ventus S1 Evo 3

Kerb weight 1919kg

SERVICE AND RUNNING COSTS

Contract hire rate £404 pcm

CO_2 0g/km

Service costs MOT test £54

Other costs Tyres £720, wipers £54.99

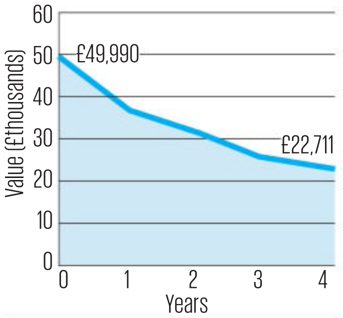
Fuel costs £489

Running costs including fuel £1318

Cost per mile 19 pence

Faults Tyre-pressure sensor failure

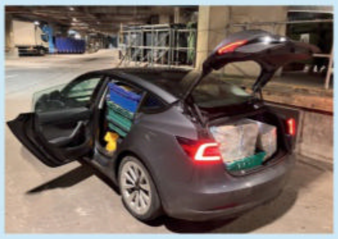
DEPRECIATION*



PREVIOUS REPORTS

19 Mar, 26 Mar, 9 Apr, 23 Apr, 30 Apr, 14 May, 21 May, 4 Jun, 25 Jun

LOVE IT



THE FINAL FRONTIER

I'm not sure how Tesla squeezed so much luggage space into a relatively compact saloon car.

SKY'S THE LIMIT

The glass roof is a source of endless joy, bathing the car with light and tinting automatically to avoid scorching your bald patch.

My driver will be back soon
19°C

POOCH PROTECTION

Dog mode is great, both for keeping your hound cool and preventing passers-by from complaining when you dash into a shop to grab a pint of milk.

LOATHE IT

CAN YOU HANDLE IT?

Why do manufacturers keep reinventing the door handle? These are needlessly fiddly. They should pop out automatically.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE

No wonder the Model 3 has so many sensors and cameras, as the high boot and thick C-pillars heavily restrict rearward vision.

*Figures are for an equivalent new model, starting in 2025

DACIA DUSTER

Our 4x4 enhances its go-anywhere vibe with some built-in camping kit

MILEAGE 5827 **WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT** To see if a sub-£27,000 price tag really does give you all the car you'll ever need

If a recently married man tells people he's going to be sleeping in his car that night, concern, it seems, is the immediate reaction. "No," I tell them, "this is for fun."

Little do they know that our Dacia Duster is now fitted with a fold-out bed, a double(ish) mattress and a tent, all of which combine to create a set-up that is poised to turn even the most bougie of Glastonbury glampers a shade of jealous green. Am I about to experience the future of camping? Is this the camper van killer? We're all about to find out with a night in a New Forest field.

We hit the first obstacle before I've even turned the engine on: there's no boot space. When getting the carry-on-camping accessories fitted, I didn't really think about how much room it would all take up. Insert face-palm emoji here. The new Duster has a pretty cavernous 517-litre load space, yet the Sleep Pack takes up the lot. There is some space under the bed's supporting structure, but that's needed for the tent itself. Luckily, though, tonight it's just me – the wife laughed and said "no thanks" – so my overnight bag, some food and basic survival equipment can go on the back seats.

I arrive at my base for the night about 45 minutes later. Despite the extra weight in the back, the Duster doesn't drive any differently, and there's no sign of the economy dropping from my regular 56mpg.

It's about 1pm as I park up. It's clear I've drawn a short campsite

Tent's integration with the Duster's rear end caused some head-scratching

Sleep Pack takes up a lot of boot space when it's not in use

Happy camper: there's no better way of bonding with your car than by living in it

straw, because my space has no shady tree coverage and the car's temperature gauge is currently reading 38deg C. No better time to start setting up camp, then...

The first job is to make the bed, so to speak. I did carry out a small trial at home to make sure it was working. It all made sense, but my lasting impression was that this was going to be a bit of aggro.

And so it proves. First, lower the rear seats flat and push the front seats as far forwards as they go. Next, pull out the wooden bed base, which is heavier than it looks – mind your fingers, like I didn't – and clip it into place. Fold out the mattress, add some extra side cushions (to stop you falling into the footwell), attach the window blackouts, which magically snap into place, and... done. This time it was all rather painless – bar the finger.

LOVE IT

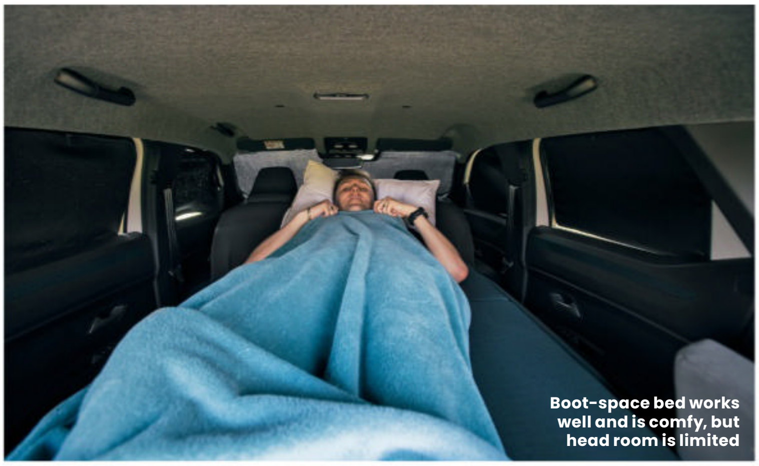
MAT'LL DO NICELY

The Duster comes with rubber floor mats, which are super-easy to clean. They are an option on Journey trim but come as standard on top-rung Expedition.

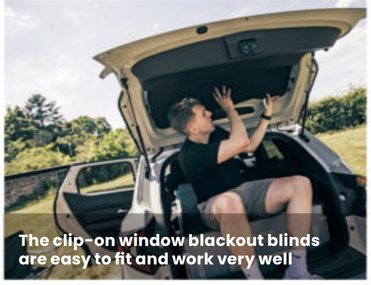
LOATHE IT

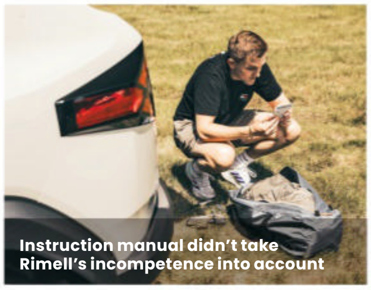
IN NEED OF SUPPORT

The seats are probably the Duster's biggest weakness. They're fine on short trips, but my lower back is crying out after a longer journey. More bolstering needed please, Dacia.


Boot-space bed works well and is comfy, but head room is limited

Now, the tent. Anyone who has put up a tent before knows it's never easy, but having pulled the Sleep Pack's synthetic canvas house out of the bag, I can tell this is going to be a different level of misery. Never mind pinning down four corners and popping it up into place; instead, one of the tent's sides connects to the Dacia's open boot, and I find out quickly why this is an issue: the open side means the wind can get in, and the wind getting in means the tent keeps trying to fly away, which then pulls out the pegs that are already (not) pinning it all down. Lord have mercy...


The clip-on window blackout blinds are easy to fit and work very well


Instruction manual didn't take Rimell's incompetence into account

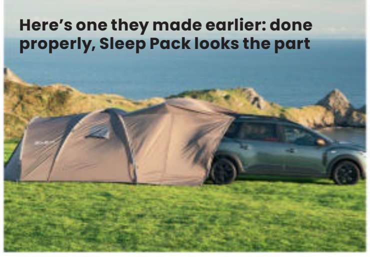
At this point I realise my campsite neighbours have formed a small crowd and are staring at me, wondering what on earth is going on. "It's the future," I preach to one. He's not buying it. They definitely think I'm mad.

I manage to get three poles in – two for the main structure, one for the door – and then go about securing the open side to the car. More confusion. Which cord goes where? What does this bit do? And why is this bit not attached?

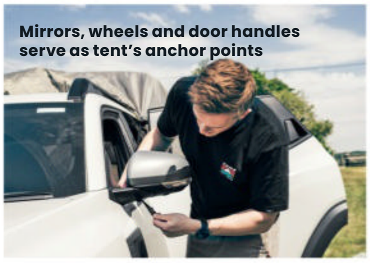
I finally relent and read the manual, which cheerily tells me simply to 'connect straps to the car'. Thanks very much. I tie them to door handles, alloy wheels, door mirrors and even the bootlid's hydraulics. About 40 minutes later the tent is at last erected and pinned down, the guy ropes are in place and the inner compartment – used here for my bags given I've got a swanky bed and I'm enjoying the overnight experience on my own – is sorted.

As you can imagine, I'm very proud. My neighbours are still watching, and is that envy I see in their eyes? Actually, no – they're laughing at it. At me. I take a step back to see what the finished set-up looks like and what everyone is finding so funny: it's the campsite equivalent of a proud four-year-old's squiggly drawing of who knows what. (In case you were wondering what it's supposed to look like when assembled by someone competent, there's a Dacia press picture just below and to the left to show you.)

"I spend the night and, to my surprise, it's quite a relaxing experience"


Here's one they made earlier: done properly, Sleep Pack looks the part

Regardless, I spend the night and, to my surprise, it's quite a relaxing experience: this has actually bettered any tent excursion I've had previously. The mattress and blackout coverings are especially brilliant. I wouldn't, however, recommend this to the claustrophobic among you: I got really quite close to the car's roof.


Mirrors, wheels and door handles serve as tent's anchor points

So to answer my earlier question: is this the future of camping? Is the Sleep Pack conversion a camper van killer? Er, not really, but it's a fun idea. For those of you considering taking the plunge, make sure you (a) have a garage in which to store the Sleep Pack when not in use, because keeping it in the boot has been quite annoying from a luggage space point of view, and (b) maybe think twice about the tent itself. It looks bloody cool when it's finally up, but getting there was the biggest faff of my life. Happy camping!

WILL RIMELL

That's the look of a man who won't survive in the wilderness for long

TEST DATA

DACIA DUSTER HYBRID 140 JOURNEY

Price new £26,050 **Price as tested** £26,700 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Economy** 55.9mpg **Last seen** 16.7.25

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

will.rimell@haymarket.com

RENAULT 5

You'd get less attention in a Lambo – and the clamour is fully deserved

MILEAGE 5761
WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT To discover if Renault's retro-infused EV hit is as good to live with as it is to look at

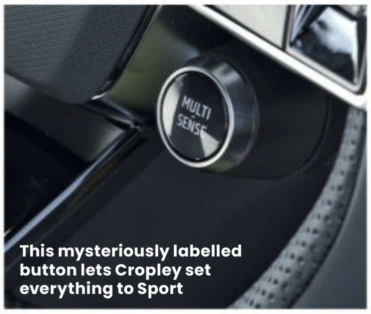
If you're lucky enough to have a Renault 5 at present, prepare for even more attention than you're getting already.

The government has decided to play into the willing hands of Europe's car makers by subsidising the purchase costs of EVs just like mine, which seems to have upped the interest of onlookers and passers-by even more.

Of all the cars you could drive to catch other folks' eyes at present, Bentley or Lamborghini included, a Pop Yellow 5 creates the most interest. Maybe a passing Ferrari F40 would excite some people more, but the 5 attracts all classes. I'm becoming quite used to returning to my car in the street, getting it started, then pausing because somebody has cantered across the road and tapped on the window, wanting to know more.

Maybe it won't last. After all, 5.5 million original 5s were sold even before the Supercinq took over in 1985. The new baby EVs will surely become an awfully common sight, especially if backed by Westminster. But for now, it's everyone's darling. I feel quite sorry for anyone driving a Peugeot e-208, which has been on the market for years now.

5761 mi
422.7 mi
276 mi



This mysteriously labelled button lets Cropley set everything to Sport

The odometer has been spinning merrily since we picked up our 5 on the dockside some time ago. It's for all the right reasons: the 5 is genuinely compact (shorter than the Renault Clio), it's fun to drive (I keep pitching it into corners knowing those fat 185/55 Continentals will look after me) and because the dependable range, at least during this part of the year, is well into the 230-mile area.

Remember how so-called experts and zealots were queueing up, not so long ago, to tell us that range anxiety was outmoded? Well, they were wrong. This Renault has just enough range for my needs and my comfort provided that I don't hurry (a 65-70mph cruise is quite enough), but I can still get rather close to its limits if I press on. Roll on the 5 with a 500-mile range.

LOVE IT

IMPOSSIBLE TO LOSE

Pop Yellow must be the brightest yellow ever formulated, and the 5 looks wonderful wearing it. Even when rather grubby, it pings at you from all angles.

LOATHE IT

HOMELESS CABLE

Given that the original, tiny 5 was able to accommodate its full-sized spare wheel in its engine compartment, I'm miffed that the EV lacks a frunk for charging cables. An annoying oversight.

When digital interfaces have quite a lot of options, like this one does, it takes me a while to decide my preferences. There are three main driving modes, accessible via an inviting steering wheel button (might be nice if it just read 'Modes' rather than 'Multi-sense'), named Comfort, Sport and Eco, plus a configurable mode called Perso that lets you set your own combination of response, steering weight and so on. My choice is Sport everything, except I prefer the light steering setting that isn't too light and just feels a bit more delicate – like the car itself.

The finest thing, now spread over most Renaults, is a little button at the right-hand fascia extremity with a car symbol surrounded by a circle. It opens a setting called My Safety Perso that allows you to choose which of the many ADAS features you like and loathe. Like everyone I know, my twin hates are the bong that tells you you're allegedly doing 40mph in a 40mph zone (when the more accurate speed recorder on Waze knows it's only 36-37mph) and the lane departure warning and/or lane keeping assistance.

Every time I experience one of the latter, I go straight to my handy mind-picture I have of the mule-headed jobsworth who has insisted on my car having this stuff, regardless of my own abilities and preferences. I'm convinced that many more cars will have been driven off roads while their drivers scrabble to disable ADAS features than were ever saved by them.

The 5's economy has been excellent. My previous claimed average of 4.6mpkWh would be better quoted at 4.8mpkWh, at least at this time of year, and that's without adopting anything more than elementary energy-saving driving techniques. Driving smoothly in town, you're hard-pressed to use significant amounts of energy at all.

Faults? There probably are some, but I can't be bothered to look.

STEVE CROPLEY

TEST DATA

RENAULT 5 COMFORT RANGE ICONIC FIVE

Price new £28,995 **Price as tested** £30,195
Faults None **Expenses** None **Range** 240 miles
Economy 4.7mpkWh **Last seen** 16.7.25

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
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BMW 1 SERIES

Buttons are few, yet the swear jar's empty. What gives?

MILEAGE 5725
WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT To see how much progress BMW has made with its entry hatch between generations

It lacks little, but a gearstick and a more talkative digital assistant would be nice

It's almost amazing that I have written seven reports on the same car and not felt the need to discuss the user interface.

So radically has design in this area changed that nowadays it's frequently the main focus of a car review – often because physical controls have been 'moved' onto a touchscreen with consequences that we've found less than gratifying.

That just isn't the case with the 1 Series, despite it too having succumbed to that trend in the transition between its third and fourth generations. The lower row of buttons (for the audio) and the upper one (for the climate control) were both wiped clean, replaced by a strip of trendy ambient lights and more icons on the central touchscreen.

I would always rather have physical controls, but the 1 Series' highly configurable digital instrument display has given me a decent substitute. It essentially replicates what you used to get in the Audi TT – still the best modern interior layout in my estimation. The speedometer and tachometer are rendered as C-shaped half dials and between them is my current audio feed, plus sat-nav instructions – or if I'm on unfamiliar roads, I can switch to see the sat-nav map. Best of all, this is integrated with Apple CarPlay, not forcing me to use the native BMW sat-nav. Then I can have the climate control menu filling the entire touchscreen.

I only wish the icons could be made larger and therefore easier to hit while I'm driving. Despite the touchscreen measuring 10.7in, I have to be precise with my weaker, left hand to increase the fan speed or temperature, and all so I can see giant digital renderings of the two front seats and active vents.

And it's even trickier to use the shortcuts at the top of the screen, if you should need them. Before finding this ideal configuration, I would often accidentally mute a podcast while trying to open up the sat-nav, which was pretty exasperating. At least the preservation of physical audio controls on the steering wheel made it easy to restart the digital chatter.

The infotainment software, BMW iDrive OS9, has mercifully been entirely glitch-free. However, CarPlay has randomly developed a curious habit, similar to that which Mark Tisshaw recently experienced in his Renault Scenic: after alerting me to a new text message, Siri turns mute when I ask him to read it aloud. I've belatedly updated my iPhone to the latest iOS but still Siri's silence persists. Sigh.

I must also mention the paddle shifters. Flicking them to change gear just doesn't hit the same way as co-ordinating my left limbs for a perfect manual shift, and when I've forced myself to use them, I've got bored after only a few corners and redirected my attention to nailing my cornering lines. I just can't see the point – and nor have I in previous automatic performance cars. Am I in the minority among enthusiasts here? Let me know.
KRIS CULMER

LOVE IT

JEAN GENIE

I was worried that my blue jeans would make a mess of the BMW's cream faux leather. Perhaps this is an outdated concern, because there's not a single stain.

LOATHE IT

AUTOMATIC SHIFTS

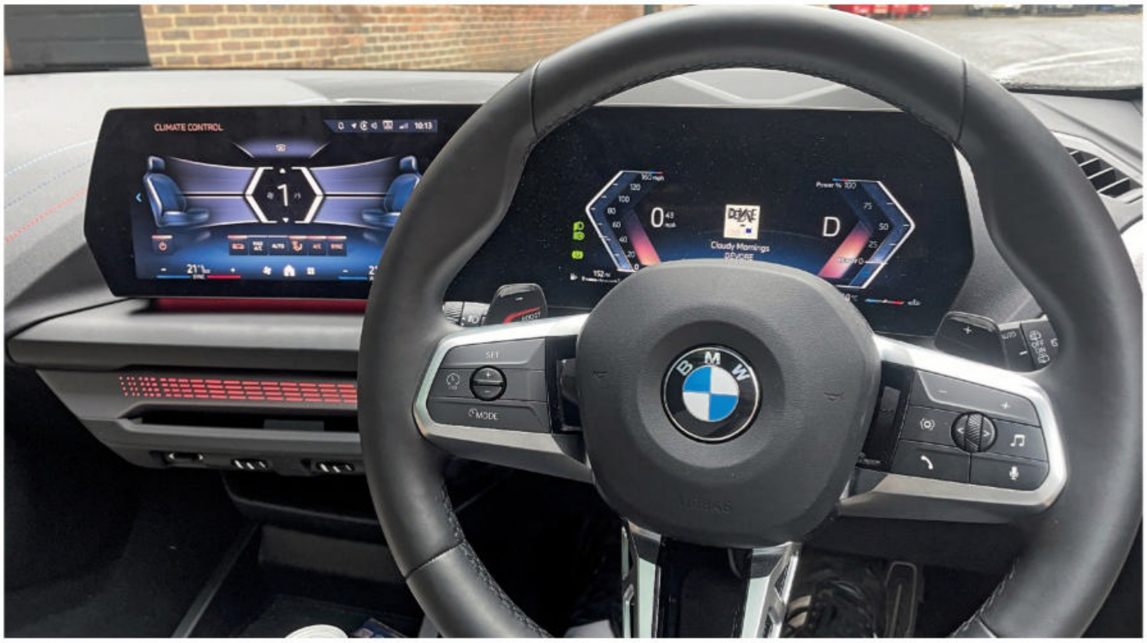
It was only a boggo Fiat Panda, but a recent holiday hire car once again reaffirmed to me how much more fun a manual gearbox can be on curvy roads.

TEST DATA

BMW 120 M SPORT

Price new £32,775 **Price as tested** £43,190 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Economy** 44.8mpg **Last seen** 23.7.25

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
kris.culmer@haymarket.com



SNAPSHOTS

CITROEN E-C3

Mileage 2023 **Last seen** 16.7.25
The closest fast-ish public charger to my flat is in a Lidl car park just over a mile away, with a peak flow of 50kW. Although my ë-C3's maximum charging rate is 100kW and I didn't quite hit the charger's advertised speed, it had still returned 18kWh a half-hour shop later. That's equivalent to 75 miles of range at my current 3.4mpkWh efficiency, and should keep me going until the end of the week. **JW**

VOLVO EX30

Mileage 702 **Last seen** 16.7.25
As noted, the tech and touchscreen are going to be a big talking point of living with an EX30. But otherwise the early driving impressions are really positive: it rides nicely on city streets and passengers have complemented its ability to soak up bumps. It handles well too, although it's not all that sporty. So no real complaints from behind the wheel, if you leave aside the tech and touchscreen – more on which next time. **JA**

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE

Mileage 1478 **Last seen** 23.7.25
Our Evoque has the rare luxury of heated rear seats, as well as heated (and cooled) front seats. My little boy has been enjoying the novelty, which is controlled via the back middle console, and will no doubt appreciate it even more once summer's over. The £300 cost might be worth it if you have regular rear passengers. **RB**

USED CARS

HOW TO BUY A MERCEDES-AMG A45

WHEN MERCEDES-AMG INVENTED THE MEGA-HATCH

The A45 broke new hot hatch ground, but early cars don't cost the earth

You only need to peruse the first-gen AMG A45's specs to see why it lured so many hot hatch buyers away from segment leaders like the Audi RS3 and BMW M135i.

This was Merc's first crack at a mega-hatch – it was so potent that a new hot hatch classification was needed – and they came out swinging. With 355bhp and 332lb ft – giving a stunning 0-62mph time of 4.6sec – the A45's engine was the most powerful turbocharged four-cylinder fitted to a production car at the time of its launch. And now, a decade later, you can have it on your driveway for as little as £10,000.

We declared the A45 "the performance king of the class". The four-pot delivered such beguiling grunt and mid-range torque that it could blast from 50-100mph far quicker than the RS3 and M135i, with a cacophony of whistles and growls to accompany it.

Indeed, the powerplant is a brute, but it's one that can be tamed and still deployed on a British B-road without undue concern for your wellbeing or driving licence.

Any downsides? The seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission is a potential bugbear: it can be a bit sluggish when you swap cogs using the paddles, and at times the engine lacks some charisma compared with the five- and six-cylinder units in the Merc's Audi and BMW rivals. That said, the A45 more than makes up for its foibles when it comes to handling: its taut, agile and responsive chassis delivers sports car levels of engagement. You can stick it into a corner with confidence, and it's easy to find a

Premium interior has sporty accents; facelift cars get a bigger display

What we said then

14 AUGUST 2013

"It is the best A-Class by some distance. It is also ballistically quick. AMG has, therefore, performed a terrific job on the A45's engine, which is both flexible and willing. Better still, the A45's savagery is not some ghastly appendage bolted on like a bodykit. Thanks to a deft and tolerant chassis, it is deployable, enjoyable and fitting for the car's ability."

good rhythm when pressing on.

There's plenty of traction, too, thanks to the A45's 4Matic all-wheel drive system, although its lack of rear-wheel bias limits its adjustability on the throttle.

Early cars weren't the most supple-riding and the gearbox can be unreliable, so we would opt for the facelifted A45 that landed in 2016. Post-facelift examples start from around £15,000, but you will pay more than £18,000 for an immaculate car with 50,000-60,000 miles. It's worth the extra: these later cars have a plusher interior, with a larger 8.3in infotainment screen and Apple CarPlay. AMG also fettled the turbo four to produce 376bhp (it was just enough of a hike to outpunch the 362bhp Audi RS4 that was launched the year before) and fitted a slicker dual-clutch 'box with revised ratios. It's a more polished hot hatch, with an even more communicative drive, a better ride and a frankly monstrous turn of pace.

Unlike the outgoing Mk2 A45, the first car was a relatively understated proposition, and only minimally restyled over the standard A-Class. There was an optional Aero pack, though, for the more extroverted enthusiast, and it gained front and rear winglets and a roof spoiler. If you do opt for a post-facelift model, find one fitted with the AMG Dynamic Plus pack, which adds a limited-slip diff to the front axle and adaptive dampers.

Pleasingly, the A45 is still the same refined and practical A-Class underneath. The figure-hugging sports seats are comfortable, and the materials used throughout the cabin, alongside the ambient lighting and metal brightwork, give the Mercedes a true premium feel.

You would have paid almost £40,000 for that premium feel and searing performance when the A45 was new, but now you can have a tidy example for £15,000. It makes AMG's wild child hard to resist for anyone hunting for a hot hatch.

SAM PHILLIPS

A45's 4Matic all-wheel drive helps deploy its four-pot's brutal output

"It's a more polished hot hatch, with a better ride and a frankly monstrous turn of pace"

How to get one in your garage

AN OWNER'S VIEW

KEVIN CARDLE

"I bought my 2013 A45 in November 2024. It's in original condition, unmodified, with a full service history and just 42,000 miles. Having never owned a sports car of any kind, and being 62, it was time to get something with real performance.

"I owned a Mercedes GLA previously, so I stuck with the Mercedes brand. I'm very happy I did – you wouldn't know it was a 13-year-old car. I love its shape and low stance, and with 355bhp it gets up to speed so quickly. Is it my mid-life crisis? Definitely."

BUYER BEWARE...

■ ENGINE

Early 2014 A45s suffered from oil feed issues to the turbocharger. Because they didn't have an anti-surge valve, pressure could only escape through the turbo impeller, which caused it to wear. There was a recall to get this repaired, so check it has been done.

Any delay or sluggish response when you open the throttle on a test drive could be an issue with the crankshaft sensor. You'll pay £30-£50 for a replacement.

Coolant leaks can occur as a result of water pump and thermostat housing failures.

■ GEARBOX

Listen out for a distinct crunching noise from the gearbox when you put the car in reverse from cold. Software updates can cure it, but it can be a mechanical issue that could cost a fortune to fix if you don't have a warranty. Watch for slow and jerky downshifts, too.

■ AIR CONDITIONING

The air-conditioning system can fail due to a faulty compressor. A replacement costs more than £300, so make sure it works.

A blown fuse or broken resistor can stop the blowers from working. Worst case is the blower motor has failed, which can cost around £90-£100 to repair.

■ INTERIOR

Make sure the sports seats are in good condition, because the bolsters can wear prematurely. Drain plugs in the boot can leak water into the rear footwells. Check the plugs themselves, and the carpets for damp.

■ BODY

Look for cracks and scratches in the plastic panel above the windscreen. This is typically caused by sun damage. Some owners recommend painting it rather than replacing.

■ INFOTAINMENT SCREEN

MMI system can suffer from software issues, causing it to glitch or fail completely. A software update should cure it.

ALSO WORTH KNOWING

The A45's 355bhp (376bhp for post-2015 cars) is a lot for a four-pot, so make sure it has been serviced every 10,000 miles or 12 months. Be wary of cars that have been remapped: the engine can be tuned to well above 400bhp, but that puts even greater strain on the gearbox. If you do buy a car with a power boost, make sure it's been done by a reputable specialist. Avoid cars with lairy aftermarket bodykits, too.

HOW MUCH TO SPEND

£10,000-£14,999

Older cars with plenty of miles. Watch for remapped examples. Still some tidy cars with a decent history to choose from.

£15,000-£19,999

Miles and age vary but mostly cleaner, well-maintained cars. Good number of post-facelift examples to choose from.

£20,000-£24,999

Pristine cars with reasonable to low miles. Lots with a full history and/or one previous owner.

£25,000 AND ABOVE

Mainly remapped cars with around 50k miles. Some Yellow Night Edition examples, too.

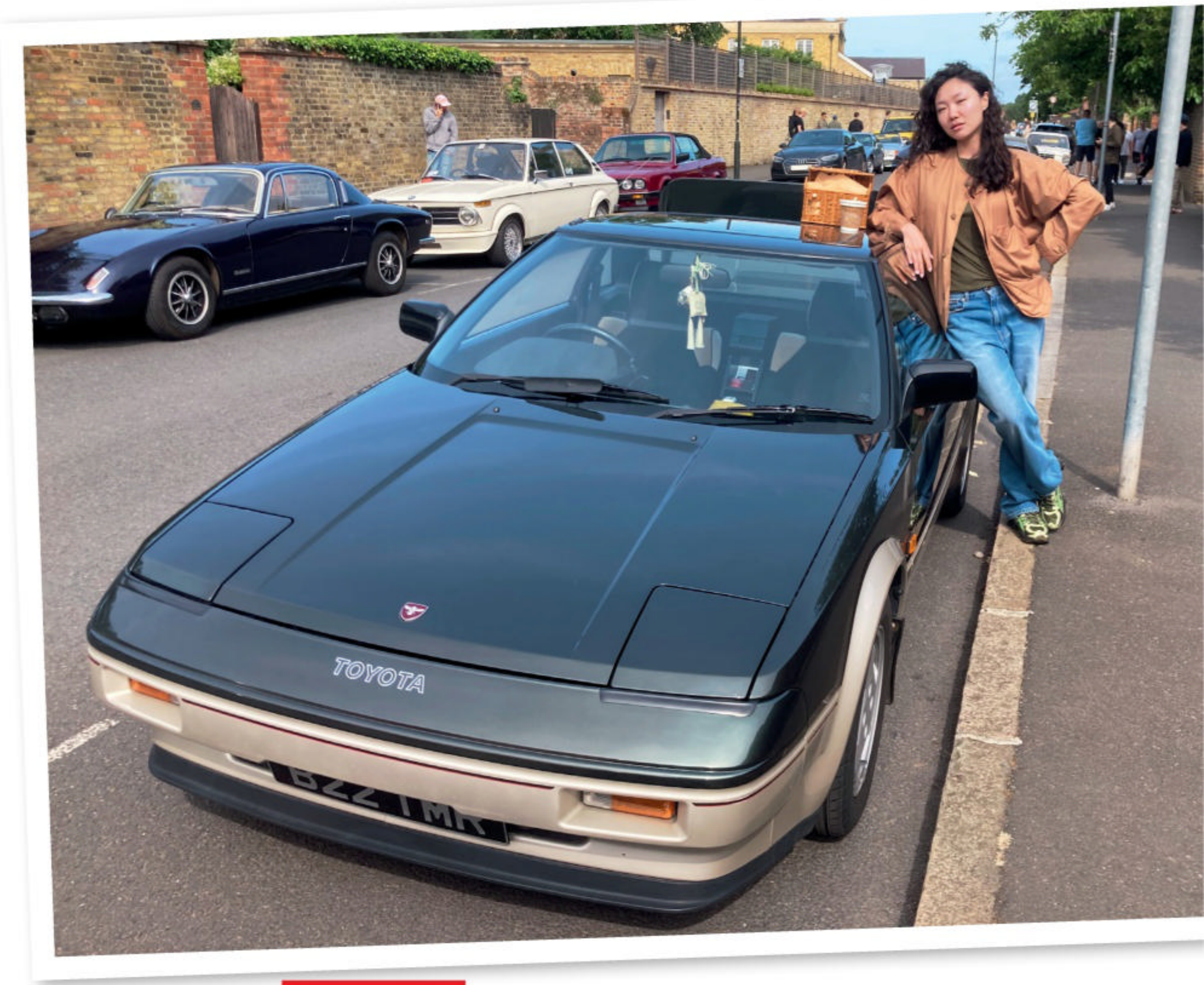
ONE WE FOUND

MERCEDES-AMG A45 2.0 4MATIC, 2016, 51,000 MILES, £18,989

This spotless, totally stock A45 has a full history and is loaded with options, including a sports exhaust. It's a facelift model, so it has the 376bhp engine, too.

My car & I

This '80s sports car is just my cup of coffee



According to reviewers of the early 1980s, the boot in the rear-mid-engined Mk1 Toyota MR2 was barely big enough for a couple of soft bags. So how come MR2 owner Sere Zhang has managed to install coffee-making facilities in hers?

As I try to interview her about the car, we're interrupted by people reaching into the boot for a disposable cup before asking for a coffee from the large, pump-action Thermos balanced on a box wedged in by 20kg of coffee beans. Sere is unfazed. After all, it's why she's at this car meet: to show off her MR2 and to promote her coffee business.

But back to the car. As if Mk1 MR2s weren't rare enough, this one is rarer still, first by looking to be in remarkably good condition and second by being finished in 'Sherwood Toning'. This two-tone Sherwood Green over champagne livery – with matching interior – was offered only from 1985-1986.

Sere loves the car and considers herself very lucky to own it: "I had decided that my first car would be a Mk1 MR2. I saw this one advertised by Fairmont Sports and Classics in Brentwood. However, when I visited them, they had just sold it. I was very disappointed – but then 12 months later, I saw they were advertising it again! This

Our cars

What's big, orange and headache-inducing?

BY ILLYA VERPRAET

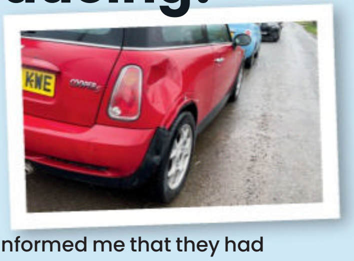
Whose car alarm is that going off? Is that my Mini's? I had better check. And just as I was coming down the stairs, I was greeted by an apologetic Sainsbury's delivery driver who had reversed his van into the side of my car as he was threading it down the narrow lane on which I lived at the time.

And so began a mostly very annoying saga that is the reason why you haven't seen my Cooper S in this section for a while. I had just got the suspension sorted out and the next stage was to get the rusty exhaust replaced and the supercharger serviced, but all of that was put on hold as I dealt with the aftermath of what seemed like a minor incident. After all, the extent of the damage was an ugly dent and a few mullered but easily replaceable plastic panels.

To the driver's credit, he didn't do a runner, but he didn't have his approved accident form with him and was reluctant to give details.

Still, you would imagine that such incidents happen regularly and supermarkets would have a well-oiled protocol for dealing with them. Instead, it took weeks to get hold of Sainsbury's relevant insurance person, who then informed me that they had up to 90 days to 'investigate'. I didn't have video footage, but I did take a picture of the van with a busted rear light next to my maimed Mini – a pretty open-and-shut case, I should think.

I probably could have got my insurance to deal with it but, given that I obviously wasn't at fault and am in the lucky position of having other cars to drive, I let it run its course – which ran, and ran, and ran. To be continued…



Verpraet got something he definitely didn't order from the delivery van

Mk1 MR2 is full of beans – and they'll come in handy during Sere's Paris road trip

Interior doesn't show its 40 years at all; note the retro CD collection

"It's amazing to drive – so smooth and accurate. And you can feel the road and how the car is behaving"

time I didn't hesitate and bought it for just less than £18,000."

In the spring sunshine, the 1985 coupé, which has only 37,000 miles on the clock, gleams and sparkles. "The dealer insisted that it is all original," says Sere. Maybe so, but those boot hinges are definitely new. Either it has been garaged and cherished all its life or someone invested considerable effort bringing it up to scratch. Certainly the paint looks unnaturally rich and lustrous – but Sere believes small marks on the champagne sections show that it hasn't been repainted.

Whatever the truth, this is an outstanding example of a rare car that's also reliable.

"I bought it last August and have done nearly 10,000 miles in it," says Sere. "Last October I drove it to Paris Fashion Week, and I will be going there again in it this year."

In between, it's her daily driver and, at weekends and events, her mobile coffee stall.

"It's amazing to drive – so smooth and the steering is accurate and direct. You can feel the road and how the car is behaving," says Sere. "On UK roads it's a bit bumpy and can get thrown off line easily in bends, but in France, where the roads are billiard table-smooth, it purrs along and its years fall away."

Sere has had the car serviced a couple of times by a garage local to her called Anarchy Customs.

"After the last service, I'm sure it came back a little faster, and it certainly drinks a little more fuel," she says. "It's a different car, but I love it."

While the rear of her MR2 is notable for its coffee facilities, the front is notable for a bonnet badge depicting an eagle. It was unique to the Mk1 MR2, and Toyota claimed it represented aerodynamic beauty through evolution. Less poetically, enthusiasts call it the screaming chicken badge. A new name for Sere's coffee, perhaps?

"I think I'll stick with A'wa," she says. "Being named after A'wa Mountain in China is much more romantic."

JOHN EVANS

Head to head

MATT PRIOR

2005 SMART ROADSTER

VS

RICHARD LANE

1998 JAGUAR XK8 4.0

Brief: Find a neglected modern classic for under £10,000 that could be saved and cherished

MP I present you a Smart Roadster. The paint is awful, the wheels are worse and poor Elmo was skinned for the interior. But these are great cars, if flawed, and it's only £2499.

RL Indeed, that vomtastic respray needs sorting pronto. The paint on my £2995 Jag isn't perfect but it doesn't require wholesale change.

MP I know septuagenarians who think they're too young for XKs, but that is undeniably handsome. You simply couldn't ignore the state of its steering wheel, though.

RL True, the helm is gross, and the headlining is sagging lower than Lil Wayne's crotch seam, but my XK's tiredness speaks to its waftability. No doubt the wear was worsened by some dabs of oppo, abetted by the balanced chassis and burly V8.

MP You could fix the headlining in the time it would take my Smart's dreadful gearbox to do a shift. But I have a dream of fitting a Honda Gold Wing's flat six in the back of it, and I think my leftover budget would get me there. So you win for now, but check back in 15 years…

RL Ha! How magnanimous of you. Yet by 2040, everything will be electric and bloated, so your flyweight Smart will seem even more refreshingly different; my sultry Jag less so. Call it a tie.

CAUGHT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

BMW Z4 M COUPE

2008, 64,000 miles, £19,950

This bona fide modern classic is worthy of its hefty price. Its M3-derived 3.2-litre straight six makes 343bhp and 269lb ft for a sub-5.0sec sprint to 60mph, made even more engaging by a manual 'box. It's said to be in good order with a solid history.

HONDA CR-X Si

1989, 24,000 miles, £24,995

If you're after the nimble, zippy feel of a Mk1 MR2 but can't find one, this Honda is an excellent alternative. It has a criminally low mileage, a long MOT and a stack of receipts. It even has a stainless steel exhaust, so its 1.6-litre 16v four should really sing.

PORSCHE 924 TURBO

1980, 99,500 miles, £13,500

This car may have done nearly 100k miles, but it was lovingly restored by the owner before last. Recent work included a full service, engine and brake overhaul and interior retrim. The mocha leather innards are stunning and it drives "extremely well". Full service history, too.

NISSAN 350Z

2006, 59,000 miles, £14,750

With a 296bhp V6 and engaging handling, the 350Z gave the Z4 M a run for its money in the mid-2000s. This "cosmetically clean" car is fitted with the rare Nismo exhaust and a plenum spacer, which supports engine health.

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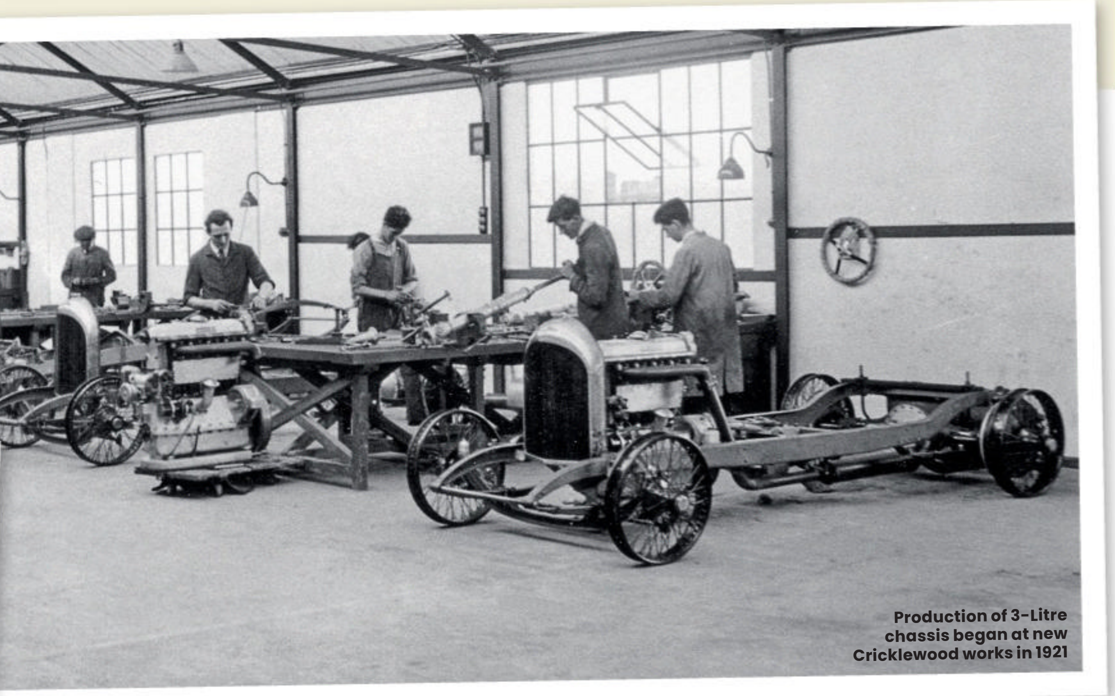
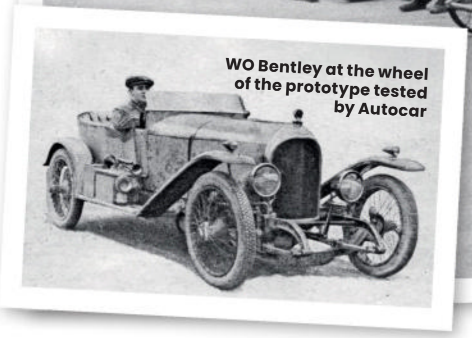

Production of 3-Litre chassis began at new Cricklewood works in 1921


WO Bentley at the wheel of the prototype tested by Autocar

Start-up Bentley struggles to begin production

It has become an all too familiar tale in this era of new technology: a new company emerges from nowhere, boasts of an amazing car and promises that production will begin very soon – and then goes suspiciously quiet.

History is repeating itself, as one 105-year-old Autocar article shows: “Since the announcement in May 1919 that a Bentley car was to be produced, over two years have rolled by. Motorists to whom the chassis appealed especially have been wondering what was happening, why no cars succeeded the original experimental chassis, and, little by little, the rumour grew that the Bentley never would be a production job.

“Within a few weeks, the first car is to leave the works in the hands of its owner, and there will follow a steady output of five cars a week. These facts alone are the firm’s answer to its critics, but one may be forgiven for dwelling a little on the difficulties which have had to be overcome.

“First, there existed no works, no staff and no experience of manufacture when the car was drawn out. Then the chassis had to be tested to the utmost limit.”

Amazingly, Bentley had let Autocar’s Sammy Davis drive the experimental prototype – with its lashed-up, mud-filled, open body – in January 1920.

He reported: “The general behaviour of the chassis suggested an entire absence of effort combined with more than ordinary tractability. All this was done with the air of a lithe, active and speedy animal straining a little on the leash. Presently a long stretch of familiar road, quite deserted, unrolled ahead. Instantly the exhaust changed its note from a purr to a most menacing roar, the white ribbon of road streamed towards the car, while the backs of the seats pressed hard upon one’s shoulder blades.

“Every part of one’s being urges greater speed in the fierce, wild intoxication of a moment supreme above all others in the life sensations of man.”

WO Bentley designed engines for Britain’s fighter planes in WW1

He also sold and raced cars for French manufacturer DFP

GETTY IMAGES

Company founder Walter Owen Bentley would later recall: “How I wished we had had the cars we could have sold a dozen times over as a result of that piece of publicity!”

Indeed, even when a 3-Litre was displayed at London’s motor show that November, its engine remained incomplete under a locked bonnet.

Not that Walter was some naive amateur – far from it. Educated as a railway engineer, he had joined the automotive industry aged 24 back in 1912, he and his brother Horace Millner Bentley becoming the sole UK dealers for French firm DFP. He had started tinkering straight away, upgrading the cars’ engines in order to break speed records and win races, earning high praise from Autocar. Chief among the modifications was weight-saving aluminium for the pistons – his inspiration being a paperweight that he saw in DFP’s Paris factory.

Of course, war then broke out, and Walter suggested to officials that his techniques be put to military use – leading to him designing the rotary engines used in Sopwith’s famous fighter planes.

You might assume royalties from this funded the post-war foundation of Bentley Motors, but Walter was rewarded a “pittance” of £8000 for it, and that only after a “beastly and tiresome” court case. Helping rather more was a boom in car sales: Horace’s team brought in some £20k from DFP sales in 1920 alone. But there was another side to this: car factories and suppliers had no need for new clients, meaning that, in Walter’s words, “to design and build a new car in 1919 without substantial capital was like being cast on a desert island with a penknife and orders to build a house”.

Somehow the brothers managed to secure a site for a new factory (well, “a small brick building”) in countryside just north of London.

Walter assembled a “small but exceptionally good” team at Cricklewood, working through 1921 until the day when a chassis was ready for Bentley’s first customer.

He was one Noel van Raalte, chosen specially because he “was very rich, was very sociable and had excellent mechanical knowledge” and would thus be “an excellent testing and propaganda tool”.

A correct assumption, proves his October 1921 letter to Autocar: “The reason I bought a Bentley was because of its exceptional performance in all respects and the care and attention which I believed had been given to its production. I can [now] truthfully say that I am more than pleased that I waited the considerable time I did while the car was being put into production.”

KRIS CULMER

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MC04 GEC	£199
V16 GEF	£290
T1 GEG	£390
Y6 GEH	£690

AR51 GEM	£390
W700 GEO	£190
X1 GEP	£1300
GEW 27W	£290
P7 GGC	£490
J4 GHH	£359
L121 GJC	£199
A9 GJO	£190
BS03 GJS	£199
BS04 GJS	£199
S60 GJS	£190
H6 GLE	£590
B10 GLF	£199
X13 GLH	£190
M1 GLT	£1500
J11 GMA	£290
L888 GMS	£390
H7 GNL	£190
Y1 GNT	£890
GO 1003	£2900
739 GOB	£1400
W6 GPB	£590
R13 GPH	£199
B1 GPK	£790
V60 GPM	£190
S9 GRJ	£490
N3 GRR	£490
PS07 GRS	£199
J666 GSF	£290
N3 GSS	£590
L14 GSW	£199
VW66 GTE	£290
J77 GTS	£730
EV06 GTV	£199
GUI 9900	£690
S888 GUS	£190
P90 GUY	£590
K3 GVP	£199
R10 GVS	£199
P1 GWC	£1200
A7 GWN	£190
H3 GWW	£390
H19 GYS	£490
X17 HAB	£490
N4 HAF	£590
JH05 HAY	£590
HG59 HAZ	£290
L1 HCC	£590
A10 HCF	£199
B3 HCS	£490
K2 HDG	£190
EM21 HEP	£290
HS03 HES	£199
A7 HGA	£290
M55 HGG	£190
H3 HGL	£190
HH 7201	£2600
A6 HHA	£390
HJI 881	£1730
M13 HKE	£190
38 HLW	£3400
MC06 HMC	£199
T31 HMM	£199
P3 HOB	£790
BY51 HOP	£190
SB11 HOW	£390
JC02 HRC	£199
T33 HRH	£190
64 HRT	£2900
H10 HSM	£190
487 HTA	£890
Y2 HUA	£199
88 HUC	£2940
HUI 557	£490
B11 HUL	£590
T18 HUX	£199
627 HWR	£790
666 HXO	£1300
H20 HYL	£199
JA 282	£7500
G8 JAB	£2300
BL55 JAF	£199
SS02 JAG	£490
F3 JAG	£3600
DG06 JAG	£490
R8 JAG	£2700
JM14 JAG	£590
W33 JAG	£1200
PS03 JAN	£590
H18 JAN	£1380
CL55 JAN	£590
BG57 JAN	£590
B413 JAN	£690
JAN 559K	£1100
JE58 JAR	£290
P800 JAS	£790
JB 5127	£4705
JBJ 9N	£940
54 JBP	£3300
V90 JCC	£390
R5 JCE	£490

F9 JCJ	£490
R29 JCR	£490
SW61 JCW	£199
J22 JDA	£150
G1 JDD	£1400
J222 JDL	£190
G4 JEA	£490
M9 JEA	£490
WB07 JEB	£199
TT04 JEF	£490
AA06 JEF	£390
SU51 JEM	£490
JA51 JER	£190
S21 JFC	£190
JFN 790	£1800
S40 JFP	£190
K13 JGL	£199
X50 JGM	£390
S88 JHG	£190
J7 JHY	£290
JIG 1244	£290
B9 JJL	£690
J50 JJP	£190
J55 JJP	£190
J19 JJT	£190
W60 JJW	£590
K777 JKB	£199
K55 JKE	£490
L9 JKG	£190
B20 JKL	£199
K300 JKW	£199
AB55 JLB	£150
P666 JLP	£190
M70 JME	£690
M700 JME	£390
L50 JMH	£690
T10 JMK	£390
Y27 JMS	£690
R55 JMT	£390
M28 JMU	£199
L3 JMW	£990
N500 JNS	£190
Y60 JOA	£199
JO10 JOE	£1380
65 JOE	£13000
JOI 3295	£990
C2 JOL	£690
CR12 JON	£490
AV15 JON	£590
J777 JOR	£350
JOY 691K	£590
J007 JPH	£390
MX54 JPS	£199
456 JR	£17500
0007 JRB	£990
R5 JRF	£590
JRZ 2332	£199
JB10 JSB	£190
M600 JSS	£150
M121 JTC	£199
B7 JTG	£590
C2 JTP	£190
N28 JUE	£990
Y29 JUE	£690
T123 JUE	£790
JUI 4421	£290
S8 JUK	£390
JUL 16E	£5900
DU64 JUL	£199
JUR 1	£21000
S60 JUU	£199
N21 JVH	£199
F3 JVS	£290
K99 JVS	£199
J2 JWA	£590
P999 KAB	£190
C1 KAJ	£1300
P666 KAP	£199
LA06 KAY	£190
HL06 KAZ	£199
Y1 KBC	£790
Y2 KBC	£190
J6 KBL	£190
V8 KCW	£590
R4 KDE	£290
J10 KDL	£199
S30 KDM	£199
T18 KEA	£290
G1 KEK	£1100
W999 KEL	£690
N37 KEN	£990
W321 KEN	£790
BE56 KER	£190
T321 KER	£490
A8 KFA	£190
D1 KGL	£790
SS12 KGS	£190
J6 KHA	£490
B1 KJA	£690
A16 KJN	£190
J30 KLM	£390

A2 KME	£290
S10 KMF	£190
S27 KMF	£199
M40 KMK	£150
E6 KMM	£190
E7 KMM	£190
F1 KNE	£1100
D1 KPF	£790
T11 KRN	£190
S404 KSB	£199
A20 KSE	£199
X3 KSM	£490
Y123 KTE	£199
S28 KTL	£199
K1 KTM	£990
E7 KTS	£590
K5 KVC	£290
S1 KWE	£290
M1 KWP	£990
MC04 KYL	£199
K5 LAO	£190
K13 LBY	£890
N9 LCG	£390
T1 LDH	£590
E8 LDM	£490
W14 LDN	£390
V6 LDO	£390
M60 LDT	£199
ML03 LEE	£690
LE12 LEE	£990
RJ53 LEE	£590
LU56 LEE	£490
L100 LEG	£390
GL04 LEN	£390
XJ06 LEN	£490
M444 LEN	£690
LEN 786	£5100
J444 LEO	£690
A12 LER	£390
LES 133E	£1400
R21 LEV	£290
GM09 LEY	£590
H13 LFB	£199
A4 LFN	£290
47 LG	£24000
S1 LGD	£890
A3 LHL	£790
LIW 454	£590
LIW 7421	£390
AM05 LJM	£190
R60 LJM	£490
PU54 LJS	£420
A9 LKB	£490
N33 LKC	£199
T3 LLP	£790
V5 LLR	£190
S1 LLS	£11500
M6 LMA	£990
J70 LMB	£390
Y3 LMF	£390
CF08 LMF	£199
N5 LNM	£190
LNV 1Y	£690
S200 LNY	£199
LO03 LOR	£390
N321 LOR	£390
A4 LOS	£690
YY14 LOU	£190
M7 LOV	£790
K444 LOV	£190
K700 LOY	£199
E5 LPC	£490
R222 LPH	£490
J9 LPL	£390
S4 LPM	£190
S6 LSE	£590
K5 LTB	£290
L16 LTC	£199
P99 LUG	£190
RG04 LUV	£199
J9 LVB	£390
X6 LVS	£490
L6 LWG	£190
80 LXO	£1900
GF04 LYN	£490
LS06 LYN	£590
EV07 LYN	£890
XK08 LYN	£390
FL11 LYN	£690
BM69 LYN	£190
LYN 562P	£890
E887 LYN	£690
MR12 MAC	£1100
TM22 MAC	£690
M13 MAF	£290
GS13 MAH	£290
WM52 MAH	£199
MB02 MAL	£590
0063 MAL	£490
X8 MAS	£2800
N24 MAS	£990

ED03 MAY	£290
YR51 MAZ	£199
M77 MBR	£490
RC55 MCN	£290
J14 MDG	£190
Y444 MDM	£190
R9 MDY	£590
MEG 148W	£1600
L80 MEO	£190
T13 MEP	£199
K90 MEP	£290
J33 MEW	£190
P60 MEW	£290
G5 MEX	£690
M1 MFB	£1800
G12 MFH	£199
CH52 MFH	£199
MFM 1Y	£990
V5 MGK	£190
W31 MGT	£290
J1 MGV	£1100
N18 MGW	£190
A2 MGY	£390
J3 MHA	£990
K8 MHL	£190
T4 MHM	£490
H8 MHW	£590
MIB 5067	£590
MJI 9473	£590
AW07 MJW	£190
MJZ 3335	£190
M600 MKD	£290
S1 MKF	£990
A19 MLD	£290
N50 MLE	£99
N29 MLP	£290
N555 MMC	£290
A1 MMU	£390
A15 MNH	£310
GO55 MOB	£290
DE63 MOD	£199
MS58 MOE	£190
MOI 9975	£590
M111 MOL	£1400
KA52 MOM	£199
CG51 MON	£2500
HX51 MON	£1100
S123 MOX	£190
MR14 MOZ	£190
MR17 MOZ	£190
MR20 MOZ	£190
MG51 MPG	£490
R321 MRT	£590
MRY 145	£1300
N2 MSK	£490
MM57 MSM	£99
X100 MSM	£290
MSS 1W	£1580
MA51 MTA	£290
M50 MTC	£190
L1 MTP	£490
MR12 MTR	£290
DS02 MUD	£199
Y444 MUM	£490
J66 MUP	£199
JO06 MUR	£390
T66 MUS	£390
M1 MVH	£790
N70 NAA	£390
W12 NAM	£190
R29 NAR	£290
X15 NAS	£1300
9068 NB	£2900
R2 NBF	£199
R1 NCG	£990
H9 NDP	£190
M10 NDX	£190
A221 NDY	£1600
E1 NEC	£990
X2 NEC	£490
G9 NEH	£490
S2 NEJ	£390
DM05 NEL	£390
AO10 NET	£490
N4 NFC	£390
CR15 NGC	£590
TA04 NGO	£190
NHZ 999	£990
NIL 494	£390
NIL 626	£590
L50 NJE	£190
J777 NJJ	£190
L10 NJV	£95
K3 NJY	£590
M61 NKM	£190
B10 NLE	£390
DH08 NMH	£199
M1 NMK	£1200
OU04 NNA	£190
MA18 NNA	£390
DE11 NNP	£199

DP13 NNY	£540
KE57 NNY	£590
43 NOD	£2800
V5 NOO	£590
K55 NOR	£290
B1 NOT	£890
NW10 NRW	£199
W3 NSM	£190
NTS 32Y	£290
T11 NUR	£190
R21 NUT	£590
NUT 741L	£1900
W1 NWJ	£1400
M21 NXN	£390
L10 NYA	£390
J40 NYN	£290
BR10 NYX	£3530
W2 OAD	£390
X10 OAD	£390
CR15 OCK	£390
MO05 OCT	£190
C13 OEY	£490
W66 OFF	£190
J555 OJB	£190
L6 OJP	£390
J17 OJT	£199
M17 OKC	£199
ST70 OLA	£290
N1 OLB	£990
JP14 OLD	£199
P15 OLD	£390
J999 OLF	£290
RO54 ONA	£290
RA57 ONV	£190
BE17 ONX	£590
BR10 ONY	£3530
J88 OPA	£199
A10 OPB	£290
K1 OPM	£690
N3 ORA	£2800
K4 ORF	£190
V2 ORO	£290
X30 ORR	£290
P511 ORT	£1090
K1 OSM	£790
V9 OTR	£190
E7 OTS	£490
M2 OUL	£190
999 OUX	£1200
OVA 1R	£1400
ME11 OWC	£390
ME11 OWJ	£390
DS12 OWL	£390
BU15 OWS	£190
M40 OXL	£199
OXZ 1067	£190
NB11 OYD	£590
J1 PAM	£2900
DM07 PAM	£490
KC07 PAM	£490
M44 PAM	£1100
DM56 PAM	£490
PAM 600M	£990
SN65 PAN	£199
PP15 PAR	£199
MR52 PAR	£390
MB58 PAR	£199
Y121 PAR	£190
PA05 PAT	£590
MC09 PAT	£590
LA10 PAT	£190
ST11 PAT	£490
BM51 PAT	£290
PD56 PAT	£390
PAT 510M	£990
CS06 PAV	£199
PAW 635	£4600
PAZ 7428	£190
M3 PBA	£490
BE11 PCL	£190
H4 PCW	£590
PDD 382	£1100
S24 PDR	£190
R30 PDS	£199
R1 PDX	£290
2880 PE	£2200
P5 PEG	£790
M200 PEH	£199
EM12 PEN	£390
Y40 PFC	£190
X700 PFC	£190
C1 PFS	£690
K900 PGB	£199
PGF 1Y	£1100
L5 PGG	£290
N2 PGK	£190
J1 PGO	£990
PGY 1Y	£790
F12 PHL	£490
L11 PHR	£540
N3 PHV	£199
PIB 4455	£190
X60 PJE	£199
H19 PJH	£390
Y6 PJJ	£590
F8 PJJ	£790

C5 PLA	£390
V6 PLB	£590
MA05 PLE	£590
T4 PLP	£290
P8 PLW	£490
A17 PLW	£290
W888 PMC	£190
P27 PMM	£190
K3 PNL	£290
L5 PNL	£290
6457 PO	£1400
POL 1V	£3700
P29 POR	£590
H1 POV	£890
C4 POV	£290
DR10 PPP	£390
A1 PPU	£590
J4 PPV	£290
PR 6092	£4000
R2 PRV	£390
X2 PSF	£390
T33 PTW	£199
DP21 PUN	£290
MY03 PUT	£390
LA11 PUT	£150
R27 PWD	£199
M44 PWL	£290
R666 PWR	£290
A14 PWS	£290
K70 PWW	£190
AR09 RAB	£590
DC63 RAC	£175
J800 RAE	£190
D22 RAF	£690
DM51 RAF	£199
W1 RAO	£990
RAV 4D	£4000
EW04 RAW	£199
RAY 90R	£1600
RAY 802W	£890
RB 1150	£4940
Y8 RBA	£420
C1 RBH	£690
N1 RBH	£690
D11 RBH	£190
S11 RBH	£190
J55 RBT	£199
R111 RCB	£190
R24 RCT	£390
RDC 223	£2320
RDF 586	£1400
SH03 REB	£199
E123 REG	£190
S362 REG	£190
J900 REG	£490
JH17 REH	£199
H14 REL	£190
E91 REL	£290
G1 REV	£1580
SH15 REV	£290
CD19 REV	£199
T222 REV	£890
MA11 REY	£290
8045 RF	£1500
V3 RHB	£490
E9 RHO	£390
K1 RHS	£990
D1 RHT	£690
574 RHY	£1400
DA13 RJA	£199
T14 RKJ	£290
S88 RKL	£290
M7 RKM	£1200
CL14 RKM	£1500
MA19 RKM	£990
M50 RLN	£290
W60 RMC	£490
M888 RMD	£290
T6 RME	£190
SS11 RMS	£390
L1 RMV	£790
R17 RNB	£290
P3 RNW	£290
1166 RO	£1580
ROD 131W	£790
HO02 ROG	£290
B6 ROG	£1900
G6 ROG	£1700
AG14 RON	£190
T798 ROO	£99
RD07 ROY	£490
RRN 712	£1200
V99 RRS	£190
PO11 RSH	£1600
N1 RSO	£490
H13 RSP	£199
A1 RSU	£690
B4 RTX	£3530
R600 RUD	£290
H13 RUN	£390
F3 RUS	£1400
AA10 RUS	£590
RR54 RUS	£290
G6 RVP	£190
B1 RWA	£990
RWA 1X	£1400

B12 RWB	£290
K3 RWD	£590
H8 RWD	£190
Y1 RWG	£2320
V1 RWT	£990
GA55 RYK	£190
J70 SAG	£290
AK13 SAM	£590
AO13 SAM	£490
WA15 SAM	£690
M321 SAS	£590
J21 SAT	£640
HS20 SAV	£290
A1 SBO	£1100
SCU 13A	£3800
SB60 SDB	£199
SH05 SDH	£199
R90 SDP	£150
P70 SDS	£390
J44 SDW	£290
Y500 SDW	£199
L300 SEC	£290
D1 SEF	£1500
MJ11 SEN	£790
M444 SER	£390
H15 SET	£390
L8 SEV	£890
B17 SEW	£490
SO51 SEW	£290
S30 SEY	£390
T9 SFE	£290
P11 SFG	£290
S123 SFH	£199
N20 SGA	£199
SGA 77Y	£290
R14 SGH	£190
A4 SGJ	£190
P1 SHC	£1880
TR18 SHL	£290
SIL 5512	£390
L15 SJE	£190
C1 SJJ	£1400
SS14 SJS	£390
PW07 SJW	£490
K31 SKB	£199
S18 SKR	£199
TT69 SLB	£290
X44 SLG	£290
C19 SLK	£490
NE55 SLK	£790
K1 SLN	£790
S19 SLO	£290
X777 SMJ	£290
T33 SMR	£290
T29 SMY	£290
MM62 SNR	£199
M1 SOK	£1100
DD10 SON	£490
R13 SON	£290
J2 SOS	£1300
B8 SOT	£590
R28 SPG	£190
N666 SPR	£190
Y666 SPR	£420
DB60 SRB	£199
F8 SRF	£590
A17 SRN	£190
J333 SRS	£390
SRZ 3056	£199
KR15 SSN	£590
LR11 SSO	£1400
AE20 STE	£290
T998 STE	£490
SD02 STU	£690
MG16 STU	£490
AP54 STU	£390
SA64 STU	£350
V77 STV	£590
CC02 SUE	£590
EV05 SUE	£490
SG08 SUE	£690
CA10 SUE	£490
FY51 SUE	£590
GA54 SUE	£490
E330 SUE	£890
SUE 521	£5880
SUI 2867	£190
AM60 SUM	£199
J1 SUU	£990
S1 SWN	£1400
0005 SXY	£590
N16 SYB	£199
S25 SYL	£490
TAB 407	£2420
P88 TAC	£290
R1 TAF	£2000
SJ07 TAF	£199
AO10 TAN	£199
CO20 TAN	£199
123 TC	£11363
BL61 TCH	£490
S4 TDF	£190
TDG 1H	£590
P16 TDM	£199
D8 TEF	£590
WP03 TER	£190
PN57 TER	£199
S21 TEU	£150
A1 TEV	£1400
L4 TEW	£590
TEZ 5172	£190
6165 TF	£990
H20 TGS	£199
TIJ 6382	£590
TJI 4854	£190
J80 TLC	£390
M90 TLC	£390
P2 TLW	£290
FL04 TME	£290
N6 TML	£490
T3 TMV	£290
S55 TNS	£199
N6 TOE	£1100
MK03 TOM	£590
TM10 TON	£590

BA06 TOW	£199
J60 TPB	£290
X5 TPN	£125
N4 TPP	£290
DA58 TRA	£199
W999 TRA	£340
X2 TRN	£490
D4 TRS	£590
Y28 TRU	£290
E8 TRV	£490
H11 TRV	£199
SU53 TTE	£2420
H18 TTR	£199
TTR 625J	£290
CS55 TTS	£390
S77 TUC	£190
PM51 TVR	£390
A20 TVT	£199
L4 TWB	£490
Y6 TWC	£490
C15 TWO	£190
TXI 667	£390
D10 UDY	£490
S111 UEP	£290
H13 UES	£290
K20 UGA	£590
D10 UGJ	£490
T333 ULL	£390
T4 UMA	£590
M250 URD	£199
VA11 URE	£290
T10 USP	£199
W4 UTV	£590
M7 VAL	£1900
M8 VAL	£1100
X111 VAL	£990
N222 VAL	£590
W888 VAL	£790
A16 VAO	£199
J200 VAS	£290
J300 VAS	£290
VDR 194	£990
K19 VEE	£190
C2 VER	£890
D1 VEY	£1200
V60 VGB	£190
A7 VHS	£190
T8 VJR	£190
J9 VJR	£190
A6 VOC	£190
CW11 VOR	£390
VW21 VOR	£290
V1 VPA	£890
M11 VTN	£220
M111 VTN	£199
S40 VVO	£290
M6 VWB	£390
T1 VWT	£990
0007 VXR	£580
M9 WAC	£490
M1 WAJ	£1600
Y10 WAL	£290
WAL 677	£1800
X10 WAX	£190
WBJ 303	£890
D1 WDG	£790
WDZ 440	£390
WDZ 880	£390
X3 WEM	£390
M444 WER	£290
WES 207K	£390
B5 WFL	£290
V1 WGS	£790
A3 WGT	£390
D1 WJS	£790
WLA 965	£1800
M27 WLB	£190
M11 WLH	£199
A8 WNR	£190
D11 WOM	£190
J1 WPP	£690
P500 WRD	£290
WSF 1R	£690
WSL 678	£1300
R7 WSO	£290
K7 WSS	£290
R7 WSY	£290
W28 WTK	£199
R44 WTP	£199
M60 WUB	£149
A17 WUF	£290
F2 WVS	£190
WN11 WYN	£199
P321 WYN	£290
A11 WYV	£190
A1 XES	£1500
J4 XGR	£290
4956 XJ	£1500
B11 XJR	£390
S70 XJS	£199
S30 XRS	£290
L13 XVS	£199
PC64 XXX	£199
1 YAC	£15000
YAS 339	£1900
A3 YBH	£290
YDA 83	£1700
DC66 YDE	£199
YEZ 5542	£199
A11 YFK	£490
R4 YGP	£490
YJZ 8824	£199
SJ55 YKE	£390
43 YKP	£1500
HO65 YLE	£290
H4 YMT	£290
CJ74 YNE	£590
R8 YSX	£190
RA11 YWA	£190
YWF 523	£890
J1 YYM	£790
AS07 YYY	£199
LO55 YYY	£590
MS10 ZOE	£540
MA02 ZTA	£199
DA64 ZZZ	£190

REGISTRATIONS URGENTLY WANTED
FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE

ROAD TEST RESULTS

Autocar's history of empirical road testing is the longest in the world. For more than a century, we have been verifying, scrutinising, describing and illustrating new cars in unparalleled detail. Driving impressions have always been a key part of this, around which the empirical tests have changed.

In pre-war years, we concerned ourselves with braking effort, gradient climbing capability and rolling resistance. Later our attention shifted to take in acceleration, top speed, stopping distance and cruising noise level.

Today we use the Horiba MIRA proving ground in the Midlands to take similar performance benchmarks of new cars – and we've recently expanded the test's remit to take in braking stamina over repeated stops and, in the case of electrified cars, DC rapid-charging performance and measured acceleration at both high and low indicated states of battery charge.

Our tests are designed first and foremost to assess the fitness for intended purpose of any given new car – and to do it better and more thoroughly than any other independent test there is.

You can dig deeper into that century of road testing with a subscription to the digital Autocar archive (visit themagazineshop.com/2025ED/ACA).

Matt Saunders, road test editor

STAR RATINGS EXPLAINED

Autocar star ratings aren't like those you may read elsewhere. We don't simply give the best car in any given class five stars, the worst one star and filter the rest in between.

Rather than thinking in entirely relative terms, we rank cars according to more abstract definitions of their performance, functionality and fitness for purpose, so that every particular verdict means something and has a degree of permanence.

We also penalise cars up to a star for what we consider particularly conspicuous and regressive failings concerning active safety systems or missing instrumentation or physical secondary controls.

☆ Hopeless, egregious. In some cases, potentially dangerous.
⯪ Appalling. An emphatic failure.
★ Very poor. Consistently flawed or seriously misconceived.
★⯪ Inadequate. Sub-standard in key areas.
★★ Mediocre. Acceptable at best.
★★⯪ Competent. Mostly average, with very few highlights.
★★★ Respectable. Consistently decent, with some strengths.
★★★⯪ Good. Well rounded and competitive in key areas.
★★★★ Very good. Sets some new class standards and misses few.
★★★★⯪ Excellent. Extends several key class standards.
★★★★★ Exceptional, unsurpassed. All but flawless.

ABARTH

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
500 Esseesse ★★★★☆	25.3.09	Charm on a stick. Raucous and fun.	7.6	6.5	1135	35.8	-
500e Turismo ★★★⯪☆	9.8.23	A stylish and entertaining pint-size EV but pricey and needs refining.	6.9	6.4	1395	-	142
595 Competizione ★★★⯪☆	26.2.14	Great when it's good but tiring when it's bad.	7.5	6.4	1135	39.2	-

ALFA ROMEO

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Giulia Quadrifoglio ★★★★⯪	29.3.17	Everything you would want a fast Alfa Romeo saloon to be. A triumph.	4.5	3.2	1700	35.7	-
Stelvio 2.2D 210 Milano Edizione ★★★⯪☆	3.1.18	Likeable, if short of class's usual refinements.	6.8	7.0	1815	49.7	-
Stelvio Quadrifoglio ★★★⯪☆	9.1.19	A real driver's car, but it stretches SUV-related bounds of acceptability.	4.0	3.3	1931	31.9	-
Stelvio 2.0T 280 Veloce AWD ★★★★☆	28.6.23	Short on premium refinement but meets its discreetly sporty brief well.	5.7	5.3	1784	32.2	-

ALPINE

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A110 Première Edition ★★★★★	16.5.18	Hilarious fun delivered in effusive and accessible fashion.	4.7	3.8	1125	45.6	-
A110 Légende GT ★★★★⯪	9.3.22	The best fast A110 we've seen but not quite the definitive version.	4.8	3.9	1140	40.2	-
A110 R ★★★⯪☆	15.11.23	Hardcore A110 has its lures but probably not enough of them for its price.	4.2	3.5	1094	39.7	-

ARIEL

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Atom 4 ★★★★★	9.10.19	Track-slayer is unrivalled for built-in quality and dynamic character.	3.2	2.4	680	39.2	-

ASTON MARTIN

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Vantage ★★★★⯪	18.9.24	Baby Aston grows up to spectacular effect. A machine of stunning breadth and likeability.	3.5	2.6	1745	28.5	-
DBS Superleggera ★★★★★	21.11.18	Effortlessly fast and intoxicating to drive, the big Aston is better than ever.	3.7	2.7	1910	25.6	-
Vanquish ★★★★⯪	26.3.25	Aston's blown V12 lives on in a devastatingly effective super-GT.	3.1	2.3	1951	25.8	-
DBX 707 ★★★★☆	30.11.22	A better DBX to drive, but still leaves room for improvement.	3.3	2.8	2278	26.2	-

AUDI

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A1 Sportback 35 TFSI S Line Style Edition ★★★⯪☆	2.10.19	Luxury supermini lacks the polish to justify its high price.	7.9	8.4	1209	57.0	-
S3 Sportback ★★★⯪☆	18.11.20	Audi delivers an effective if somewhat unlovable hot hatch.	4.8	4.2	1552	39.0	-
RS3 Sportback Carbon Vorsprung ★★★★☆	9.7.25	Uber-A3 refuses to be defined just by its truly special five-cylinder engine.	3.6	3.3	1619	34.1	-
S5 Launch Edition ★★★★☆	15.1.25	Rounded sports saloon with a characterful V6 and new-found dose of driver appeal.	4.1	3.8	2027	33.7	-
A6 50 TFSIe Quattro S Line ★★★★☆	5.1.22	Hybrid tech boosts saloon's refinement, charm and running credentials.	5.7	5.2	2077	45.4	34
S6 E-tron Avant Launch Edition ★★★⯪☆	16.4.25	Strong technical showing is undermined by price and lack of discernible character.	3.7	2.9	2346	2.8	256
RS6 Avant GT ★★★★☆	5.2.25	Retro visual charm meets unprecedented dynamism in big-hearted estate.	3.2	2.7	2144	26.3	-
A7 Sportback 50 TDI Quattro Sport ★★★⯪☆	11.7.18	Easy on the eye and to live with but let down by stolid dynamics.	5.8	5.3	1880	53.1	-
A8 L 60 TFSIe Quattro Sport ★★★⯪☆	17.6.20	Technically impressive but not as cosseting as a limo ought to be.	-	-	2330	-	-
E-tron 55 Quattro ★★★★⯪	26.6.19	A rounded, uber-luxurious addition to the premium EV niche.	5.4	4.2	2569	-	218
E-tron S Quattro ★★★⯪☆	2.6.21	A slick, tech-laden luxury operator but no dynamic landmark for EVs.	4.2	3.6	2643	-	-
Q2 1.4 TFSI Sport ★★★⯪☆	9.11.16	Fit for purpose but a less compelling option than it might have been.	8.1	8.2	1316	-	-
SQ2 Quattro S Tronic ★★★★☆	20.3.19	More fun than you might expect from a crossover or an Audi S model.	4.5	4.1	1530	34.5	-
Q4 E-tron 40 Sport ★★★⯪☆	7.7.21	Practical, pleasant and efficient but not a superior premium product.	8.1	7.8	2112	-	-
Q5 TDI Quattro 204PS S Line ★★★⯪☆	14.5.25	Pleasant and competitive but no particular step forward.	6.7	7.1	2072	42.6	-
Q6 E-tron Quattro Edition 1 ★★★⯪☆	2.10.24	EV is hard to love, easier to recommend, with good dynamics and strong EV credentials.	5.3	4.3	-	2.8	247
Q7 3.0 TDI Quattro S Line ★★★★☆	12.8.15	Plush, suave and spacious but so-so to drive.	6.2	6.2	2245	-	-
SQ7 4.0 TDI Quattro ★★★★⯪	26.10.16	A class-topping blend of superlative comfort and usable performance.	5.1	4.5	2330	37.9	-
Q8 50 TDI S Line ★★★★☆	26.9.18	Striking and effective SUV-coupé leaves us wanting more.	6.9	6.7	2285	40.1	-
R8 V10 Plus ★★★★☆	30.12.15	Supercar grips and goes even harder but wants for its predecessor's delicacy.	3.1	2.6	1730	-	-
S E-tron GT ★★★★☆	2.4.25	Audi's super-EV holds great appeal in its purest form but isn't at the bleeding edge.	3.1	2.4	2361	2.8	262

BENTLEY

			0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Bentayga W12 ★★★★⯪	18.5.16	Versatile, genteel, luxurious SUV with a silken sporting edge.	4.9	4.4	2440	-	-
Bentayga EWB Mulliner Blackline ★★★★☆	24.4.24	Stretched SUV lacks the Mulsanne limo's charm but is a better luxury car by far.	4.4	3.8	2600	25.6	-
Continental GT Speed ★★★★☆	22.12.21	Remains a wonderful grand tourer but can fall short as an entertainer.	3.4	2.7	2279	22.0	-
Continental GTC V8 S ★★★★⯪	19.4.23	Sporty V8 execution adds vivacity to a car that makes you feel good.	3.6	3.2	2295	29.1	-
Continental GT Speed Hybrid First Edition ★★★★☆	16.4.25	Electrons make fastest GT quicker but not necessarily better.	3.1	2.5	2462	28.0	47
Flying Spur Hybrid Mulliner ★★★★⯪	17.8.22	Mightily convincing PHEV limo more than earns its Bentley wings.	4.4	3.9	2596	30.1	28

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Flying Spur Speed First Edition ★★★★☆ 21.5.25 Hulking V8 hybrid powertrain broadens Spur's remit and skyrockets performance.	3.2	2.7	2750	26.7	44
BMW					
120 M Sport ★★★⯪☆ 31.12.24 Credible and complete junior BMW still lacks distinguishing driver appeal.	7.3	6.8	1489	45.8	-
218i M Sport Gran Coupé ★★★☆☆ 8.4.20 Junior Gran Coupé hits some high notes but fails to inspire.	8.8	8.4	1375	58.2	-
220i M Sport Coupé ★★★★☆ 1.6.22 A good coupé rather than a great sports car.	7.3	7.3	1546	46.8	-
M2 Coupé Manual ★★★★⯪ 12.7.23 Junior M car takes huge objective leaps but smaller subjective ones.	4.5	3.8	1687	32.1	-
320d M Sport Auto ★★★★★ 15.5.19 BMW's one-time default-choice executive saloon hits even greater heights.	6.9	6.8	1639	63.3	-
330d xDrive M Sport Plus Edition Touring ★★★★⯪ 15.1.20 An estate that's powerful, classy and great to drive – but with a price to match.	5.5	5.2	1922	52.6	-
330e M Sport ★★★★⯪ 1.7.20 Slicker and sweeter-handling than the average PHEV. A true 3 Series.	-	-	1740	-	-
M440i xDrive ★★★★☆ 6.1.21 A rounded, engaging and potent coupé let down only by its looks.	4.1	3.7	1775	44.0	-
M4 Competition ★★★★⯪ 21.4.21 A very modern M car and a brilliantly versatile and enjoyable one.	3.9	2.9	1800	32.7	-
M4 CS ★★★★☆ 23.4.25 Stunning performance and pace comes with costs that aren't so easy to justify.	2.9	2.5	1747	32.4	-
i4 M50 ★★★★☆ 19.1.22 Fast, refined and with lots of traditional appeal to convert sceptics.	4.1	3.2	2248	-	186
M4 CSL ★★★★☆ 16.11.22 A next-level M car, with the more complex temperament to match.	3.6	2.7	1625	31.1	-
M5 ★★★⯪☆ 29.1.25 A technical leap, but one born more out of necessity than inspiration.	3.5	2.8	2373	27.3	35
i5 eDrive40 M Sport Pro ★★★⯪☆ 29.11.23 Has dynamic appeal but less convincing than BMW's other EV saloons.	5.4	4.4	2213	-	235
550e xDrive M Sport Pro ★★★★☆ 3.4.24 Undeniably capable and a fine plug-in hybrid sports saloon.	4.4	3.5	2232	40.1	47
i7 xDrive60 M Sport ★★★★⯪ 15.2.23 It has taken huge strides as a luxury car – and still drives like a BMW.	4.5	3.4	2758	-	264

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
840d xDrive ★★★★☆ 16.1.19 A likeable big GT, albeit not the most luxurious or rewarding on sale.	5.0	4.6	1901	49.2	-
M8 Competition Convertible ★★★⯪☆ 5.2.20 Has attitude to spare but isn't the complete super-GT.	3.3	2.7	2020	31.6	-
M8 Competition ★★★⯪☆ 3.6.20 Highly capable but doesn't truly satisfy as either a sports car or a GT.	-	-	1960	-	-
X1 xDrive23i M Sport ★★★⯪☆ 25.1.23 A decent family crossover but a poor BMW.	6.4	6.0	1800	45.6	-
X4 M Competition ★★★☆☆ 13.11.19 Fast and precise, if short on the big-time charisma that you would expect.	4.0	3.3	2028	29.0	-
X5 xDrive30d M Sport ★★★★☆ 2.1.19 Better to drive than the SUV norm but not better across the board.	6.6	6.6	2279	43.1	-
X6 M Competition ★★★☆☆ 20.3.24 Unyielding performance focus makes for a fast but compromised SUV.	3.5	3.1	2442	29.3	-
X7 M60i xDrive ★★★★☆ 29.3.23 Uncompromising-looking X7 is seriously fast but laudably refined.	4.2	3.7	2600	28.9	-
iX xDrive60 M Sport ★★★★⯪ 9.7.25 Took the luxury EV to new heights in 2022 and nobody has caught up yet. Still great.	4.2	3.3	2637	2.7	314
Z4 M40i with Handschalter Pack ★★★★☆ 21.8.24 Manual gearbox gives six-year-old roadster new depth.	5.7	5.9	1561	36.9	-
BMW ALPINA					
B3 GT Touring ★★★★⯪ 15.1.25 Last-dance B3 has mighty breadth and will go down as one of the all-time greats.	3.3	2.7	1910	29.4	-
B8 Gran Coupé ★★★★☆ 22.9.21 Superbly rounded but lacking some dynamism implied by its looks.	3.5	2.8	2100	-	-
BYD					
Atto 3 Design ★★★☆☆ 31.5.23 Lack of attention to detail detracts from the impressive battery tech.	7.0	6.2	1787	-	201
Seal Design ★★★⯪☆ 17.1.24 Frustrating software lets down the mostly impressive hardware.	5.8	4.7	2116	-	279
CATERHAM					
Seven 160 ★★★★☆ 20.11.13 Fun entry-level version of B-road toy smacks just a little of compromise.	8.4	8.7	510	44.8	-
Seven 620S ★★★★⯪ 9.3.16 Supplies fun intravenously with a mix of freneticism and road-going usability.	3.8	4.2	650	29.5	-
Seven 420 Cup ★★★★⯪ 31.8.22 Track-day variant serves up sensational driving thrills – for a price.	4.2	3.4	560	35.3	-

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
CHEVROLET					
Corvette 3LT ★★★★☆ 22.6.22 Big step up for charismatic, usable and temptingly priced American icon.	3.9	3.2	1679	32.9	-
Corvette Z06 3LZ ★★★★☆ 16.8.23 Incredible engine and chassis makeover, but the price has to be right.	3.1	2.4	1670	26.1	-
CITROEN					
Ami Colour ★★⯪☆☆ 11.1.23 Cleverly conceived but hard to recommend, given its limited capabilities.	-	-	471	-	39
ë-C3 Max ★★★⯪☆ 30.4.25 Predictable limitations but also plenty of usability, space and cheer for the money.	10.7	10.3	1479	2.8	-
C3 Aircross Puretech 110 Flair ★★★⯪☆ 7.3.18 Practical small crossover isn't outstanding to drive but is likeable nonetheless.	11.5	10.7	1159	39.5	-
C4 Puretech 130 Shine Plus Auto ★★★☆☆ 26.5.21 Has rational and irrational appeal but lacks a fine-tuned execution.	9.5	9.2	1320	56.4	-
ë-C4 X Shine ★★★⯪☆ 3.5.23 EV motoring done differently, with value, but its successes are qualified.	9.7	8.8	1623	-	162
C5 Aircross BlueHDi 180 Flair Plus ★★★⯪☆ 13.2.19 Attractive and interesting, although its style is better than its substance.	9.0	8.5	1540	47.8	-
C5 X Puretech 180 Shine Plus ★★★★☆ 28.9.22 Good value and comfy, this is the kind of car that Citroën should be making.	7.8	7.1	1502	47.8	-
CUPRA					
Born 204PS 58kWh V3 ★★★⯪☆ 6.7.22 As good as the family hatchback EV class gets in places but not as good as it could be.	6.7	6.2	1794	-	220
Born VZ First Edition ★★★★☆ 9.10.24 An already fine electric car's driver appeal is lifted but not transformed.	5.4	4.2	1996	3.5	269
Leon Estate 310PS VZ3 ★★★★☆ 8.9.21 Fiercely quick and dependable but pulls the heartstrings only lightly.	4.9	4.3	1707	40.1	-
Leon 2.0 TSI 245PS VZ2 ★★★★☆ 27.7.22 Brilliantly rounded hot hatch shines in its simplest spec.	5.9	4.7	1468	43.4	-
Ateca 2.0 TSI 4Drive DSG ★★★⯪☆ 23.1.19 Hot crossover is objectively impressive but lacks true driver reward.	4.9	4.4	1615	36.7	-
Formentor 2.0 TSI 4Drive VZ2 DSG ★★★★⯪ 3.2.21 Versatile, interesting, rewarding. One of the best fast crossovers yet.	5.1	4.3	1583	36.4	-
Terramar 2.0 TSI 4Drive VZ2 ★★★★☆ 18.6.25 Hottish cousin of the Volkswagen Tiguan is likeable but a bit too sensible.	5.6	5.1	1737	35.0	-

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Tavascan V1 ★★★☆☆ 5.2.25 Electric SUV is competent but not very compelling or memorable.	6.0	5.0	2129	3.2	246
DACIA					
Sandero Stepway TCe 90 Prestige ★★★★☆ 28.4.21 Cut-price crossover is compromised in surprisingly few areas.	11.9	11.9	1096	54.1	-
Jogger TCe 110 Comfort ★★★★⯪ 20.4.22 Superb versatility, outstanding value and so likeable with it.	11.0	11.0	1267	48.5	-
Duster Hybrid 140 Journey ★★★★⯪ 27.11.24 Notably improved yet barely any pricier.	9.7	8.7	1413	40.2	-
Bigster Hybrid 155 Journey ★★★★☆ 11.6.25 Big Duster in name, big Duster in nature.	8.9	7.8	-	47.5	-
DS					
3 Crossback Puretech 155 Prestige ★★★☆☆ 10.7.19 No design smash hit. Short on perceived quality and dynamic polish.	8.8	8.3	1205	48.6	-
4 E-Tense 225 Performance Line+ ★★★⯪☆ 29.6.22 High price and a list of niggles keep this family hatchback away from the top.	7.4	6.0	1706	44.7	26
7 Crossback Puretech 225 Prestige ★★★⯪☆ 19.9.18 DS's first SUV is a competent but slightly bland addition to the class.	8.6	7.0	1616	44.6	-
7 E-Tense 4x4 360 La Première ★★★⯪☆ 26.4.23 More focused and makes subtle gains, but its powertrain and ride frustrate.	5.7	4.6	1956	36.6	29
9 E-Tense 225 Performance Line Plus ★★★⯪☆ 2.2.22 Posh saloon is alternative and devoted to its luxury remit but no show-stopper.	8.6	7.1	1886	44.7	20
FERRARI					
296 GTB ★★★★★ 21.12.22 Stellar modern-era Ferrari supercar has an unrivalled breadth of talent.	2.7	1.9	1648	37.8	15
SF90 Stradale ★★★★☆ 3.11.21 Sets the performance benchmark but isn't a track-handling great.	2.5	1.8	1698	24.4	16
FIAT					
500 Twinair Lounge ★★★⯪☆ 24.11.10 Characterful and stylish, but its real-world economy lets it down.	11.7	13.0	1070	42.1	-
500e 42kWh Icon ★★★★☆ 26.1.22 More than just an electric city car and a welcome return to form.	8.1	7.7	1365	-	142
600e La Prima ★★★⯪☆ 27.3.24 Electric crossover is decent value and easy to drive but otherwise a bit easy to overlook.	8.8	7.7	1587	-	173

FORD

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Focus 1.5 Ecoboost 182PS ST-Line X ★★★★⯪ 20.2.19 Better to drive and look at than before and impressively good value.	8.9	7.8	1417	43.8	-
Focus ST ★★★★☆ 11.9.19 Big on character and performance but not quite truly immersive.	6.1	4.9	1433	40.7	-
Puma 1.0T 125PS MHEV Titanium ★★★★⯪ 25.3.20 The driver's car the compact crossover class has been crying out for and more besides.	10.0	9.6	1260	50.0	-
Puma Gen-E Select ★★★★☆ 4.6.25 Ford finally brings engagement to the small EV class.	7.2	7.2	-	3.4	179
Puma ST ★★★★☆ 24.3.21 Well judged, versatile and fun. The jacked-up hot hatch done well.	7.2	6.2	1301	41.5	-
Explorer Extended Range Premium RWD ★★★⯪☆ 23.10.24 Electric family crossover is better to drive than rivals, but at a cost.	5.8	4.8	2067	2.9	262
Kuga 2.5 PHEV ST-Line ★★★⯪☆ 24.6.20 Good value and potentially frugal, but this SUV has more to give.	-	-	1844	-	-
Mustang Mach-E Extended Range RWD ★★★★☆ 23.6.21 Worthy of the name? Perhaps not, but it's still impressive and likeable.	6.8	5.6	2130	-	-
Mustang Mach-E GT AWD ★★★☆☆ 27.4.22 Has its moments but lacks the dynamism of a typical fast Ford.	4.2	3.5	2298	-	-
Mustang Dark Horse ★★★⯪☆ 20.11.24 Brimming with character but more compromised than many of its forebears.	4.5	3.5	1853	26.1	-
Tourneo Courier 1.0 Ecoboost Titanium ★★★⯪☆ 10.7.24 Has some Ford-typical star quality but not enough for the money.	10.8	10.6	1426	47.4	-
Tourneo Connect 1.5 Ecoboost PHEV Titanium ★★★⯪☆ 2.7.25 PHEV power is a smart choice in this versatile, though expensive, utility MPV.	9.7	9.5	1876	40.3	64
Transit Custom L2H1 320 2.0 EcoBlue 150PS Limited ★★★★☆ 8.5.24 Likely to remain the default commercial vehicle, despite a high price.	12.1	11.8	1971	38.8	-
Ranger 2.0TD EcoBlue 205PS Wildtrak ★★★★⯪ 14.6.23 Pick-up truck is practical, car-like to drive and generally hard to fault.	9.8	9.9	2348	36.6	-

GENESIS

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
G70 2.2 CRDi Luxury Line ★★★⯪☆ 10.11.21 Likeable left-field choice struggles to threaten the establishment.	7.2	6.7	1751	60.4	-
Electrified G80 ★★★⯪☆ 12.10.22 Electric limo doesn't quite hit the mark like its Kia and Hyundai platform-mates.	4.4	4.0	2349	-	272
GV60 Sport Plus ★★★★☆ 24.8.22 Handsome, fast, sophisticated electric crossover is the best Genesis yet.	3.8	3.1	2192	-	220
GV80 3.0D Luxury 5-Seater ★★★⯪☆ 15.9.21 Rich, spacious and comfortable but not a world-class luxury SUV yet.	6.7	6.6	2217	45.0	-

GWM

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Ora Funky Cat 48kWh First Edition ★★⯪☆☆ 1.2.23 Electric hatch is decent value and has funky looks but is a mediocre experience overall.	7.7	7.2	1580	-	154

HONDA

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
E Advance ★★★⯪☆ 26.8.20 More than just a pretty face in the EV crowd but its limited range is an issue.	7.9	-	1535	-	110
Jazz 1.5 i-MMD Hybrid EX ★★★⯪☆ 7.10.20 Eminently practical, impressively frugal and pretty joyless to drive.	9.6	10.0	1248	57.0	-
Civic Type R GT ★★★★⯪ 25.10.17 Hot hatch is a sheer delight for enthusiast drivers and their bank balances.	5.7	7.1	1400	57.0	-
HR-V e:HEV Advance Style ★★★⯪☆ 24.11.21 Fine ergonomics and big on superficial charm but leaves us cold.	9.2	9.3	1397	43.2	-
e:Ny1 Advance ★★★☆☆ 1.11.23 EV is charming in some ways but has too little substance to justify the price.	8.6	6.9	1756	-	211

HYUNDAI

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
i10 1.2 MPi Premium ★★★★☆ 15.4.20 Smallest Hyundai regains leadership of the city car class.	12.3	12.9	999	52.5	-
i20 1.0 T-GDi 100 48V SE Connect ★★★⯪☆ 24.2.21 Steady gains for a versatile runabout still lacking some personality.	9.7	10.1	1065	63.5	-
i20 N ★★★★⯪ 25.8.21 N division's finest car to date. A serious hot hatch with real dynamic polish.	6.1	5.4	1231	50.6	-
i30 Tourer 1.4 T-GDi Premium SE ★★★⯪☆ 13.9.17 Competent, servile, inoffensive-looking family estate offers little to like or dislike.	9.5	9.7	1425	48.9	-
Ioniq 6 RWD Ultimate ★★★⯪☆ 7.6.23 Usable, rangy and innovative EV let down by cabin packaging and ride.	7.2	6.2	2006	-	272
Kona 1.0 120PS Advance ★★★★☆ 6.9.23 Hyundai brings some cheer, value and space to the compact crossover class.	10.4	10.3	1352	50.4	-
Tucson 1.6 T-GDi Hybrid Premium ★★★★☆ 17.3.21 Tucson shows that Hyundai can do both style and substance.	7.6	6.2	1612	47.7	-
Ioniq 5 N ★★★★★ 7.8.24 A little big and heavy, but compelling like no other EV to date.	3.5	2.7	2221	-	224
Santa Fe Hybrid 4WD Premium ★★★★☆ 16.10.24 A superb lounge on wheels, but let down by its powertrain.	7.9	7.5	2007	32.9	-
Nexo ★★★⯪☆ 12.6.19 Impressive effort that heads in the right direction for hydrogen fuel cell cars.	9.6	9.7	1852	-	-

INEOS

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Grenadier 3.0 T Fieldmaster ★★★⯪☆ 20.9.23 Unquestionably a serious proposition but maybe lacking in innovation.	8.0	8.1	2682	20.9	-

JAECOO

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
7 SHS 2WD Luxury ★★⯪☆☆ 9.4.25 Chinese PHEV SUV is efficient and keenly priced but has too many usability flaws.	7.3	6.4	1814	35.0	41

JAGUAR

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
XE 2.0 200PS R-Sport ★★★★⯪ 1.7.15 Junior saloon hits the spot, matching the best of its German rivals at their own game.	7.6	6.7	1530	48.7	-
XF Sportbrake 300PS R-Sport AWD ★★★⯪☆ 17.4.19 Estate is built on enthusiast values but in need of a wider update.	6.6	6.2	1727	36.8	-
E-Pace D180 AWD SE ★★★⯪☆ 11.4.18 Misses the mark for keen drivers but is a desirable SUV nevertheless.	9.9	10.5	1768	49.2	-
I-Pace EV400 S ★★★★⯪ 12.9.18 Jaguar's landmark car strikes a heavy blow to Tesla's luxury EV monopoly.	4.5	3.5	2236	-	-
F-Pace SVR ★★★★⯪ 24.7.19 Broad-batted and can vividly thrill but hasn't forgotten its SUV roots.	4.1	3.5	2070	29.4	-
F-Pace 400e R-Dynamic HSE ★★★★⯪ 1.12.21 Facelift hits the mark. Electrification is a mixed but creditable success.	5.1	4.6	2264	-	24
F-Type P575 R AWD Coupé ★★★★☆ 29.4.20 The same likeable bruiser behind those prettier features.	-	-	1743	-	-

JEEP

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Avenger Electric Summit ★★★⯪☆ 24.1.24 Not perfect but successfully takes Jeep in a fresh direction.	8.3	6.9	1601	-	172
Compass 2.0 Multijet II 140 4WD Limited ★★★⯪☆ 3.10.18 Pricey, pokey, gruff Jeep is a long shot for SUV market success.	11.0	11.5	1540	44.8	-
Compass 4xe S ★★★☆☆ 16.2.22 Not without niche appeal but off the pace in too many respects.	6.4	5.7	1872	46.9	22
Renegade 2.0 Multijet II 140 4WD Limited ★★★⯪☆ 28.10.15 Charmingly authentic but also pricey and rather rough and ready.	10.8	11.2	1502	52.6	-
Renegade 4xe Trailhawk ★★★☆☆ 30.6.21 Electrified Jeep has some charm but is typically rough and ready.	6.7	5.6	1816	39.4	21
Wrangler 2.2 Multijet II Overland ★★★★☆ 10.4.19 Off-road icon is now more competent on it.	9.0	9.1	2122	37.6	-

KGM

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Tivoli XLV ELX Auto ★★★☆☆ 14.9.16 Practical, well-priced crossover is competent but far from compelling.	12.0	12.6	1469	-	-
Torres 1.5T K40 AWD ★★⯪☆☆ 4.6.25 Cheerful enough, although not as cheap or capable as we had hoped.	11.3	12.0	1661	35.0	-

KIA

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Picanto 1.0 MPI 2 ★★★⯪☆ 11.9.24 No great advance for the breed but likeable, capable and still here.	13.4	13.9	985	51.4	-
Ceed 1.6 CRDi 115bhp 2 ★★★★☆ 29.8.18 Big step up in the family hatchback class is a watershed moment for Kia.	9.9	9.6	1411	70.3	-

TOP 3

BEST CONVERTIBLES

1 Mazda MX-5

2 Porsche 718 Boxster

3 Ferrari Roma Spider

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

Road tests revisited

1988 LANCIA THEMA 8.32

Talented executive saloon is turned into world's punchiest FWD car by Ferrari 308's V8. This is "smooth, powerful and exceptionally flexible" and doesn't inflict torque steer, but the 8.32 lacks "the suppleness, outright response and handling precision of its peers".

Price £37,895
Engine V8, 2927cc, petrol
Power 215bhp at 6750rpm
Torque 210lb ft at 4500rpm
Weight 1423kg
0-60mph 7.2sec
0-100mph 18.7sec
Top speed 140mph
Economy 15.6mpg

1961 ALFA ROMEO GIULIETTA TI

Saloon version of the "already legendary" little Giulietta Sprint coupé becomes available in RHD. In sporty TI form, it has firm suspension yet liberal body roll but nevertheless can be driven "much faster than other cars of similar class or performance".

Price £1642
Engine 4 cyls in line, 1290cc, petrol
Power 65bhp at 5500rpm
Torque 69lb ft at 3500rpm
Weight 943kg
0-30mph 5.1sec
0-60mph 17.7sec
Top speed 97mph
Economy 28.8mpg

READ FULL ROAD TEST FOR FREE*

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

Proceed 1.4 T-GDi GT-Line S ★★★⯪☆ 27.2.19
Alluring and interesting but not quite as special to drive as it looks.
9.5 8.9 1475 42.6 -

Xceed 1.4 T-GDi First Edition ★★★⯪☆ 20.11.19
Looks good and drives well yet lacks some practicality and polish.
9.3 8.7 1452 46.8 -

Soul EV Urban ★★★⯪☆ 5.7.23
Not actually that cheap but likeable and complete.
8.0 8.3 1569 - 147

Niro EV 3 ★★★★☆ 7.9.22
A good family EV made better, despite some missed opportunities.
6.9 5.6 1739 - 246

EV3 81.4kWh GT-Line ★★★★☆ 31.12.24
New-era Niro is rationally compelling although it's not a game-changer.
7.2 6.4 1858 2.6 265

Sportage 1.6 HEV 2WD GT-Line S ★★★⯪☆ 15.6.22
Bold family SUV catches the eye but won't hold your interest to drive.
7.3 6.4 1658 44.8 -

EV6 77.4kWh RWD GT-Line S ★★★★☆ 9.10.24
Not the outstanding EV it once was yet still a likeably bold choice.
7.5 6.3 - 2.9 227

EV6 GT ★★★⯪☆ 4.10.23
Lots of pace and usability for the money but not enough driver appeal.
3.6 2.7 2161 - 209

Sorento 1.6 HEV T-GDi AWD 2 ★★★⯪☆ 20.1.21
Lacks polish, although its abundant utility appeal and value shine through.
8.5 7.9 2006 43.3 -

EV9 GT-Line S ★★★★☆ 31.1.24
Style, space, versatility and range for a more reasonable price than rivals.
5.1 4.6 2660 - 220

LAMBORGHINI

Huracán Performante ★★★★⯪ 11.10.17
Breathtaking track makeover brings it close to greatness.
2.9 2.0 1590 22.4 -

Huracán Evo RWD ★★★★⯪ 20.5.20
Finest driver's car Lamborghini makes is also the most attainable.
- - 1389 - -

Revuelto ★★★★⯪ 4.12.24
New-era V12 Lamborghini is an extraordinary statement of intent.
2.5 1.7 1960 24.1 6

Urus ★★★★☆ 3.7.19
Italy's latest 'mostro' has a driving experience to blow your mind.
3.3 2.8 2285 28.5 -

LAND ROVER

Range Rover Evoque P300e R-Dynamic HSE ★★★★⯪ 10.2.21
A better plug-in compact SUV. Expensive but slick and luxurious.
6.8 5.9 2158 32.7 24

Discovery Sport D180 AWD SE ★★★★☆ 8.1.20
Off-road fidelity and character outweigh a lacklustre powertrain.
10.3 10.5 2145 47.5 -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

Discovery TD6 HSE Luxury ★★★★⯪ 12.4.17
A proper Land Rover, modernised, refined and as likeable as ever.
8.7 8.8 2230 - -

Range Rover Velar D240 HSE ★★★⯪☆ 30.8.17
Stylish, advanced and accomplished but in need of a better powertrain.
9.3 9.0 2089 48.2 -

Defender 110 P400 X ★★★★⯪ 13.5.20
World-class capability. Brilliant on and off road – at a price.
- - 2388 - -

Defender 110 P635 Octa Edition 1 ★★★★⯪ 30.4.25
Outrageous, unnecessary and totally awe-inspiring.
4.6 3.7 2717 22.1 -

Range Rover Sport D300 Dynamic SE ★★★★⯪ 2.11.22
Deeply appealing and deeply accomplished, with a price to match.
7.2 6.6 2511 42.5 -

Range Rover Sport SV Edition One ★★★⯪☆ 28.8.24
More capable than most rivals, but others are more compelling.
3.9 5.1 2546 28.9 -

Range Rover D350 HSE ★★★★⯪ 13.7.22
A fantastically well-isolated luxury car and fully paid-up capable 4x4.
6.3 6.0 2667 35.9 -

Range Rover P550e Autobiography ★★★★☆ 9.4.25
A unique and enthralling character that brings added refinement in PHEV form.
4.9 4.0 2979 26.6 44

LEXUS

LBX FWD Premium Plus Design ★★★⯪☆ 29.5.24
Crossover convinces as a small premium car, but only just.
8.4 8.4 1306 45.2 -

NX 350h AWD Premium Plus Pack ★★★★☆ 16.3.22
Interesting, refined and efficient, although not as polished as the best.
7.1 6.7 1812 44.7 -

RX 500h F Sport ★★★⯪☆ 22.3.23
Classy and luxurious, but that might not be enough for keener drivers.
6.1 5.5 2088 31.7 -

ES 300h Takumi ★★★⯪☆ 6.2.19
Boldly styled, economical saloon has a singularly rational but dry character.
8.7 7.6 1742 48.8 -

RC F Ultimate Edition ★★★⯪☆ 6.11.24
Bellows in some ways, whispers in others. A little flawed but never dull or boring.
4.7 3.8 1733 30.1 -

LM 350h AWD Takumi ★★★☆☆ 7.2.24
MPV is a fascinating luxury-market curio but no threat to the old-school limo.
8.6 8.2 2368 40.5 -

LOTUS

Emira V6 First Edition ★★★★⯪ 2.4.25
The British sports car is alive, well and expensive.
4.4 4.0 1493 29.0 -

Emeya 600 GT ★★★★☆ 28.5.25
A good electric saloon and a good Lotus.
4.1 2.8 2478 2.4 218

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

Eletre R ★★★⯪☆ 24.7.24
There's plenty to like about the new Lotus but little sign of the old Lotus.
3.1 2.2 2682 - 216

Evija ★★★★☆ 30.7.25
Mind-blowingly fast and intense, with some defining digital inhibitions.
2.8 1.9 1906 2.2 122

MASERATI

Grecale Trofeo ★★★⯪☆ 18.10.23
A belting engine but high-priced and not the best-driving Grecale.
3.6 3.2 2097 33.6 -

Levante Diesel ★★★☆☆ 30.11.16
A mildly interesting also-ran, with a weak engine and so-so handling.
6.8 6.9 2205 41.5 -

Levante S Granlusso ★★★⯪☆ 8.5.19
Better engine improves the class's curate's egg but can't redeem it.
5.1 4.5 2232 23.7 -

Granturismo Trofeo ★★★⯪☆ 11.9.24
An appealing grand tourer that lacks some sophistication for the price.
3.6 3.1 - 33.0 -

Granturismo Folgore ★★★⯪☆ 26.2.25
Assured and likeable but could only ever be bought with the heart – even sans V8.
2.9 2.3 2358 2.3 183

MC20 Cielo ★★★★☆ 16.10.24
Dynamic iconoclast, old-school charmer, occasional GT. A unique supercar.
4.0 2.8 1783 29.6 -

MAZDA

2 1.5 Skyactiv-G 90PS SE-L Nav ★★★★☆ 22.4.15
The go-to option for keen drivers is also a convincing all-rounder.
10.4 11.0 1050 - -

3 2.0 Skyactiv-X 181PS GT Sport ★★★★☆ 6.11.19
Sweet to drive and great to behold, but the Skyactiv-X engine is no knockout.
9.1 9.1 1425 57.0 -

MX-30 145PS GT Sport Tech ★★★⯪☆ 10.3.21
Has smart looks and a plush interior, but the first Mazda EV deserved more.
9.1 8.6 1663 - -

CX-30 2.5 e-Skyactiv G Exclusive-Line ★★★★☆ 19.2.25
Alternative powertrain is a credit to this voluble, unconventional compact SUV.
7.6 7.6 1422 45.2 -

CX-5 2.2D 150PS 2WD Sport Nav ★★★★☆ 28.6.17
Still moderately left of field but now likeable in greater proportions.
9.4 9.2 1620 53.9 -

CX-60 e-Skyactiv D 3.3 RWD Exclusive-Line ★★★⯪☆ 10.5.23
Old-school in all the best ways, but the ride is difficult to overlook.
7.6 7.2 1893 52.3 -

MX-5 1.5 SE-L Nav ★★★★⯪ 2.9.15
An outstanding and usable sports car at an outstanding price.
8.4 7.9 1050 - -

McLAREN

720S ★★★★★ 24.5.17
Sufficiently complete and exciting to dominate rivals and hugely fast.
2.9 2.0 1419 24.2 -

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*For three weeks from publication date

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
750S	★★★★☆	19.6.24	McLaren's mainstay is a bit of a wild child – at times, to its own cost.	2.9	2.0	1412	28.8	-
Artura	★★★★⯪	19.10.22	Brilliantly packaged, invitingly poised and wise use of electrification.	3.2	2.1	1552	32.9	17
Artura Spider	★★★★⯪	6.11.24	Artura finds extra form in convertible guise.	3.1	2.2	1618	27.2	17
GT	★★★⯪☆	27.1.21	Plenty of pace and purity, less GT-typical usability and refinement.	3.3	2.3	1580	34.2	

MERCEDES-AMG

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A45 S 4Matic+ Plus	★★★★⯪	4.3.20	AMG brings its hottest hatch yet to life without harming usability.	4.1	3.3	1661	41.5	-
C63 S E Performance 4Matic+ Night Edition Premium Plus Estate	★★★☆☆	31.7.24	Fascinating engineering feat falls flat as an exciting super-estate.	3.3	2.8	2217	27.1	7.1
GT 63 4Matic+ 4-Door Coupé	★★★★⯪	13.3.19	AMG defies physics with a four-door GT that handles beautifully.	3.3	2.7	2135	30.1	-
GT 63 S E Performance 4-Door Coupé	★★★⯪☆	21.6.23	Rocket-ship GT with astonishing powertrain but still lacks driver reward.	2.9	2.5	2339	23.9	6
EQS 53 4Matic+ Night Edition	★★★★☆	8.6.22	Good but doesn't quite live up to its spectacular on-paper potential.	3.6	2.8	2673	-	259
S63 E Performance Night Edition	★★★★☆	2.10.24	Prodigiously quick, confoundingly slick in its handling, but has a coarseness to it.	3.5	2.7	2666	26.1	-
GLE 53 4Matic+ Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	14.10.20	Remarkable dynamic versatility but lacks some driver appeal.	5.4	4.9	2471	29.4	-
SL 63 4Matic+ Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	26.7.23	Stonking V8 doesn't quite redeem a car of as many sacrifices as gains.	3.5	2.8	1939	26.2	-
GT 63 4Matic+ Premium Plus Coupé	★★★⯪☆	14.8.24	Fearsomely quick and truly usable but less lovable than before.	3.1	2.7	1972	30.7	-

MERCEDES-BENZ

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A200 AMG Line Executive	★★★★☆	24.5.23	Significant progress for a keen-handling and efficient premium hatch.	7.8	7.3	1396	59.3	-
A250e AMG Line Premium	★★★☆☆	5.8.20	Falls some way short of a rounded 'premium' driving experience.	6.7	5.4	1665	57.8	-
B180 Sport	★★★★☆	3.4.19	In an ever-shrinking niche, this compact MPV deserves consideration.	8.4	8.3	1405	51.3	-
CLA 250 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★☆☆	21.8.19	Nearer the mark to look at but still way wide of it as a driver's car.	6.8	6.1	1555	48.3	-
C300e AMG Line	★★★★⯪	4.5.22	Long-range hybrid tech gives C-Class an outstanding selling point.	5.8	5.1	2005	49.0	48
E220d AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★★☆	3.1.24	An effective blend of convention, comfort, luxury and modernity.	7.2	5.9	1917	65.8	-
E450d Estate Exclusive Premium Plus	★★★★⯪	19.3.25	Big-hearted diesel has speed, space and opulence. The only car you would ever need.	4.9	4.3	2167	46.1	-
EQE 350+ AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	4.1.23	Hot on comfort and tech but lacklustre on range, material quality and space.	6.0	5.5	2386	-	262
EQS 450+ Business Class	★★★★☆	7.5.25	Progress has been made, but this limousine still isn't quite the ultimate luxury EV.	5.9	4.9	2608	2.6	248
EQS 450 Business Class SUV	★★★⯪☆	6.3.24	Ultra-luxurious seven-seater strays confusingly into MPV territory.	5.5	5.2	2899	-	265
S580e L AMG Line Premium Plus Executive	★★★★⯪	6.4.22	Plug-in S-Class is the best of an otherwise ordinary generation.	5.2	4.2	2530	37.0	45
EQA 250 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★☆☆	17.11.21	Competent but entirely average. For the money, we expect better.	8.4	7.6	2030	-	200
GLB 220d 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★⯪☆	16.9.20	Smart looking and practical but its identity feels stretched at times.	7.4	7.1	1810	55.4	-
EQB 300 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★⯪☆	18.5.22	A versatile premium EV that doesn't easily command its premium.	7.7	6.8	2235	-	-
GLC 300 4Matic AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★⯪☆	13.9.23	Shines in places but doesn't notably elevate the GLC proposition.	6.5	6.0	1929	41.2	-
GLS 400d 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★⯪☆	12.2.20	Has much to commend it but not enough to be the S-Class of SUVs.	6.5	6.0	2634	38.2	-
G350d AMG Line	★★★★☆	17.7.19	Customary capability, charm and ego, now with 21st-century luxury.	7.5	7.2	2451	31.3	-
G500 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★★☆	25.9.24	Anachronistic, iconoclastic and expensive but very hard not to love.	5.1	4.5	-	30.7	-
CLE 300e AMG Line Premium Plus Coupé	★★★★☆	13.11.24	Electrification brings traditional Merc strengths to a desirable mid-sized coupé.	6.1	5.5	2122	37.1	49

MG

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
3 Hybrid+ Trophy	★★★⯪☆	12.6.24	Good value and with no serious vices but still lacks a final layer of polish.	6.8	6.2	1311	47.9	-
4 EV Long Range SE	★★★★☆	5.4.23	Good value, useful and fun to drive to boot.	7.1	6.1	1692	-	185
S5 EV Long Range Trophy	★★★★☆	23.7.25	It outstrips expectations for the money, except on range.	6.0	5.1	1723	3.3	217
ZS Hybrid+ Trophy	★★★☆☆	22.1.25	Roomier, cleverer and better-equipped than you would expect for the money.	7.6	6.6	1422	41.5	-

MINI

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
John Cooper Works	★★★★☆	14.5.25	A proper hot hatch let down by a stiff ride and an impenetrable user interface.	5.8	4.5	1363	42.0	-
Countryman C Exclusive	★★★⯪☆	17.4.24	Spacious but sends mixed messages on family-friendly refinement.	8.7	7.7	1618	46.9	-
Aceman SE Exclusive	★★★⯪☆	8.1.25	Compact SUV has the usual Mini charm but limited extra grown-up appeal.	6.8	5.7	1756	3.1	162

MORGAN

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Plus Four	★★★⯪☆	12.8.20	Refreshing and fun in that true Morgan way but lacks a little polish.	5.1	4.3	1013	54.0	-
Plus Six	★★★★☆	10.4.24	The individualist's sports car made better.	4.4	3.3	1188	37.2	-
Super 3	★★★★⯪	9.11.22	Adds some subtle modernity to the 3 Wheeler's endless giggles.	6.9	5.9	644	43.5	-

NISSAN

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Juke 1.0 DIG-T 117 Tekna	★★★⯪☆	29.1.20	Impressive in some respects but outstanding in few.	11.9	11.8	1256	46.0	-
Qashqai 1.3 DIG-T 158 Tekna	★★★★☆	28.7.21	Ticks the important family car boxes but its powertrain frustrates.	10.0	9.3	1412	44.9	-
Ariya 87kWh Evolve	★★★⯪☆	26.10.22	Surprisingly traditional and luxurious although not wholly successful.	8.2	6.4	2109	-	-
X-Trail e-Power e-4orce AWD Tekna	★★★★☆	22.2.23	Capable all-rounder that deals effortlessly with everyday life.	6.6	6.0	1947	33.8	-

OMODA

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
5 1.6 TGDI Comfort	★★⯪☆☆	20.11.24	Chinese SUV has some promise as a purely rational buy but feels under-developed.	7.4	6.3	1474	38.2	-

PEUGEOT

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
e-208 Allure Premium	★★★★☆	6.5.20	Stylish, drivable, usable, reasonably priced – and the best small EV	-	-	1455	38.2	-
308 1.2T Puretech 130 GT	★★★★☆	25.5.22	A reminder of the old Peugeot magic. Small, supple and a bit special.	9.5	9.2	1358	55.3	-
408 Hybrid 180 GT e-EAT8	★★★★☆	11.10.23	Novel Peugeot shows an alternative path for the family car.	8.2	7.3	1746	42.1	40
508 BlueHDi 180 S&S GT Auto	★★★★☆	24.10.18	Stylish and likeable but lacking the polish of more premium rivals.	8.8	8.5	1671	52.0	-
508 SW Hybrid 225 S&S Allure e-EAT8	★★★★☆	8.7.20	This is a comfortable car that looks smart and feels classy.	-	-	1720	-	-
508 SW Hybrid4 PSE	★★★★☆	5.5.21	Hits notable handling highs but feels less than sharp elsewhere.	5.7	4.7	1892	44.0	-

TOP 3

BEST SMALL COMPANY CARS

1 Volkswagen Golf eHybrid

2 Audi A3

3 Mini Cooper SE

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

0-60mph | 30-70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

e-2008 GT Line ★★★½☆ 30.9.20
Cheaper versions impress; pricier ones won't worry class leaders.
9.5 8.9 1638 - -

e-3008 73kWh Allure ★★★½☆ 4.8.24
Electric family SUV is rich, handsome and refined but no technical tour de force.
8.5 7.1 2132 - 219

5008 Hybrid 136 GT ★★★☆☆ 12.2.25
Concept car style can't save the function-follows-form engineering.
9.9 9.4 1736 44.0 -

POLESTAR

2 BST Edition 270 ★★★½☆ 12.4.23
A creditable attempt at electric car thrills, although not quite fully formed.
4.5 3.4 2161 - 188

3 Long Range Dual Motor Launch Edition ★★★★☆ 12.2.25
Electric SUV is spacious, attractive and enticing to drive - with a few lapses.
4.6 3.8 2610 2.3 235

PORSCHE

718 Boxster ★★★★½ 8.6.16
Better than ever objectively, but at the expense of vital subjective appeal.
5.4 4.3 1395 35.9 -

718 Cayman S ★★★★½ 10.8.16
Still the greatest sports coupé out there, even if it doesn't sound like it.
4.8 3.9 1430 - -

718 Spyder ★★★★½ 1.4.20
Spyder's flat six rectifies most, if not quite all, of the 718's shortcomings.
4.3 3.5 1350 30.1 -

TOP 3

BEST OFF-ROADERS

1 Land Rover Defender Octa

2 Jeep Wrangler

3 Toyota Land Cruiser

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

0-60mph | 30-70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

718 Cayman GT4 RS ★★★★★ 14.9.22
A feast of noise, revs, handling poise and thrills. Incredibly special.
3.9 3.0 1444 27.1 -

911 GT3 PDK ★★★★½ 11.8.21
Less versatile than some past GT3s but still spectacularly good.
3.4 2.7 1430 29.2 -

911 Turbo S ★★★★½ 10.8.22
Has a questionable raison d'être but is engaging and awesomely capable.
2.5 2.0 1640 36.3 -

911 Carrera T ★★★★☆ 30.8.23
Sharper 911 has a likeable simplicity but makes key compromises.
4.9 3.8 1456 39.1 -

911 GT3 RS ★★★★½ 22.11.23
Esoteric even by hardcore 911 standards but simply monumental.
3.2 2.5 1476 26.7 -

911 Dakar ★★★★☆ 10.1.24
Rally-raid-themed throwback charms like no other modern 911.
3.3 2.6 1660 36.0 -

911 S/T ★★★★★ 3.7.24
Porsche's GT division alters its recipe to deliver an all-time great.
3.7 2.6 1408 30.9 -

911 Carrera GTS ★★★★½ 5.3.25
Hybrid tech punts barnstorming Carrera into the supercar sphere.
2.8 2.6 1607 34.3 -

Macan Turbo ★★★★½ 4.6.14
Luxury SUV meets sports car in a compact, well-priced package.
4.7 4.3 2050 30.9 -

Macan Turbo Electric ★★★½☆ 19.2.25
Otherwise appealing EV is undone by chassis tech.
3.0 2.5 - 2.1 219

Cayenne S ★★★★½ 21.2.24
Rebooted Cayenne impresses and the charming V8 is our pick.
5.0 4.3 2256 28.8 -

Cayenne Turbo ★★★★☆ 5.9.18
As impressive as ever but not quite the driver's car it once was.
3.9 3.4 2307 31.5 -

Cayenne Turbo S E-Hybrid ★★★½☆ 27.5.20
Technically impressive but fails to make a convincing case for itself.
- - 2490 - -

Cayenne Turbo GT Coupé ★★★★☆ 20.7.22
Uncompromising rapid SUV is a bit of a monster – but a likeable one.
3.1 2.7 2251 26.1 -

Panamera 4 E-Hybrid ★★★★☆ 22.1.25
Understated plug-in hybrid is a Swiss Army knife super-saloon.
3.8 2.4 2370 30.1 29

Taycan Turbo S ★★★★½ 30.10.24
Porsche deftly keeps its superb EV on the boil.
2.6 1.9 2356 2.7 233

RENAULT

Clio TCe 100 Iconic ★★★★½ 27.11.19
Plusher, smoother, more mature. A car of substance as well as style.
11.6 10.9 1138 56.9 -

0-60mph | 30-70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

4 E-Tech Comfort Range Iconic ★★★★☆ 16.7.25
Charismatic but grown-up, the reborn 4 is a real contender.
8.2 7.5 1493 3.3 182

5 E-Tech Comfort Range Iconic Five ★★★★½ 12.3.25
Accomplished and well priced, the 5 changes the affordable EV game.
7.7 7.2 1461 3.1 166

Megane E-Tech Techno ★★★½☆ 23.11.22
Likeable and eye-catching, but rivals have moved the EV game on.
6.9 5.4 1688 - 198

Captur TCe 130 S-Edition EDC ★★★½☆ 18.3.20
Second-generation Captur should prove popular, but not with this powertrain.
9.4 9.2 1363 53.1 -

Arkana E-Tech Hybrid 145 S-Edition ★★★½☆ 13.10.21
Eminently sensible but unspectacular.
11.0 10.1 1365 58.3 -

Scenic E-Tech Iconic Long Range ★★★★☆ 26.6.24
The Scenic finally conforms but does so with style and substance.
8.1 6.3 1916 - 313

Austral E-Tech Iconic Esprit Alpine ★★★½☆ 19.7.23
Clever hybrid and pleasant cabin but let down by clumsy dynamics.
8.5 6.9 1696 43.5 -

ROLLS-ROYCE

Ghost Series II Black Badge ★★★★½ 25.6.25
Only flirts with sporting appeal, and gives up no Rolls accomplishments in doing so.
4.5 3.6 2576 25.8 -

Phantom ★★★★★ 4.4.18
The world's greatest and finest luxury car is now also the very best.
5.5 4.4 2780 28.4 -

Spectre ★★★★½ 20.12.23
Superbly lavish and intoxicatingly refined, if shy of epoch-making.
4.1 3.1 2935 - 245

Cullinan Black Badge ★★★★☆ 19.2.20
Far more likeable to drive than look at, for those who have a use for it.
4.9 4.2 2739 23.6 -

SEAT

Ibiza 1.0 TSI SE Technology ★★★★½ 19.7.17
Grown-up supermini shows its rivals how it's done – in most respects.
10.0 10.0 1047 55.6 -

Leon eHybrid FR ★★★½☆ 2.12.20
Competent and efficient but verges on being forgettable to drive.
7.2 6.2 1558 46.3 26

Arona 1.0 TSI SE Technology ★★★★☆ 15.11.17
Polished, mature all-rounder has since lost its class-best crown.
10.5 10.7 1149 40.9 -

Ateca 1.5 Eco TSI FR Black Edition DSG ★★★☆☆ 25.10.23
Once-appealing Nissan Qashqai rival now shows some signs of neglect.
8.9 8.0 1396 44.4 -

0-60mph | 30-70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

SKODA

Fabia 1.0 TSI 95PS SE Comfort ★★★★½ 9.2.22
Comfy, spacious and good value, this supermini is Skoda at its best.
9.9 9.7 1117 58.7 -

Scala SE 1.5 TSI 150PS DSG ★★★½☆ 31.7.19
Different from the bigger Octavia but perhaps not by enough.
7.9 7.3 1200 52.9 -

Octavia 2.0 TDI 150PS SE L First Edition Estate DSG ★★★★☆ 2.9.20
Leads the charge to take Skoda upmarket and mostly succeeds.
8.4 8.7 1510 73.0 -

Octavia Estate vRS ★★★★☆ 29.1.25
A fine estate made more engaging rather than a great hot hatch made a bit bigger.
5.9 4.8 - 37.6 -

Superb SE L 2.0 TDI 150PS Estate ★★★★★ 17.7.24
The large, functional estate car modernised in all the right ways.
8.4 8.2 1673 68.7 -

Karoq 2.0 TDI 150PS Scout ★★★½☆ 30.1.19
Practical, comfortable Skoda is short on charm and dynamic polish.
8.9 9.6 1629 47.1 -

Elroq 85 Edition ★★★★½ 19.3.25
Comfortable, efficient, practical and intuitive; a well-rounded, class-topping EV.
6.1 5.0 2085 3.5 246

Enyaq iV 80 Lounge ★★★★☆ 18.8.21
Practical, rangy, well priced. Hits a sweet spot in the EV market.
8.3 7.8 2098 - 262

SMART

#1 Premium ★★★½☆ 8.11.23
Drivability frustrations mar an otherwise agreeable experience.
5.6 4.6 1861 - 229

#3 Premium ★★★½☆ 15.5.24
Makings of an interesting alternative EV but let down by the finer details.
5.7 4.9 1832 - 205

SUBARU

Crosstrek 2.0i e-Boxer Touring ★★★½☆ 28.2.24
Improved manners for junior off-roader are welcome, if not transformative.
10.4 10.4 1620 45.3 -

Outback 2.5i Lineartronic Touring ★★★½☆ 27.9.23
A pretty good answer to a question that only a few people asked.
9.3 8.7 1690 42.8 -

Solterra AWD Touring ★★★☆☆ 15.3.23
A hint of Subaru-typical capability doesn't take this EV quite far enough.
6.7 6.2 2051 - 169

SUZUKI

Across 2.5 PHEV E-Four CVT ★★★★½ 7.4.21
Excellent hybrid powertrain makes it one of the best PHEVs around.
6.4 5.8 1966 44.4 48

TESLA

Model 3 Standard Range Plus ★★★★☆ 4.9.19
Wrinkles aside, it offers great electric performance and usability at this price.
5.8 4.7 1633 - 156

Model	Rating	Date	Verdict	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Model 3 Long Range	★★★★☆	14.2.24	Packs a real punch. Both updated Model 3s are fine propositions.	4.4	3.4	1846	-	277
Model Y Long Range AWD	★★★★☆	23.3.22	A far better electric car than a premium SUV.	4.7	3.6	1978	-	234
Model S P90D	★★★★⯪	20.4.16	Great EV, intriguing driver's car. Not quite the perfect luxury GT.	3.5	3.0	2220	-	214
Model S Plaid	★★★⯪☆	2.8.23	Astonishing pace but not a fully rounded performance saloon.	2.4	1.7	2220	-	301
Model X 90D	★★★★☆	15.2.17	High-rise EV strains under SUV brief but still feels like a history maker.	5.2	4.2	2508	-	147
TOYOTA								
Aygo X Limited Edition	★★★⯪☆	11.5.22	A mostly very grown-up small car but also an expensive one.	15.6	16.5	974	58.7	-
Yaris 1.5 Hybrid Design	★★★★☆	23.9.20	Grows not only in stature but also in ability and subjective appeal.	9.2	8.8	1140	65.0	-
GR Yaris Circuit Pack	★★★★★	3.3.21	Toyota, on a roll with driver's cars, provides yet another winner.	5.2	5.0	1283	39.2	-
Corolla 2.0 Hybrid Design Touring Sports	★★★★☆	5.6.19	A big step up for Toyota in a vital sector and a better hybrid to boot.	8.5	7.7	1537	52.6	-
Prius Plug-in Design	★★★★☆	23.4.25	Better late than never for best Prius to date.	6.6	5.6	1542	56.1	46
bZ4X AWD Vision	★★★⯪☆	18.1.23	A decent effort all round but not exceptional in any way.	6.4	5.9	2023	-	208
Land Cruiser 2.8 D-4D 204 Invincible	★★★★☆	21.5.25	Remains supremely tough but now has added kerb appeal and drivability.	10.3	10.3	2503	30.7	-
Mirai Design Premium	★★★★☆	16.6.21	Impressive hydrogen fuel cell car has made strides but remains hamstrung overall.	8.7	8.3	1937	-	-
GR Supra Pro	★★★★☆	14.8.19	Fast, usable and has plenty going for it but leaves us wanting more.	4.4	3.6	1495	39.0	-
Hilux 2.8 D-4D GR Sport	★★★⯪☆	1.3.23	Gazoo-branded Ford Ranger Raptor rival is formidable but lacks fun factor.	10.0	9.5	2241	32.5	-
VAUXHALL								
Corsa 1.2 Turbo 100PS Ultimate Nav Auto	★★★⯪☆	22.1.20	Supermini is improved in many ways but lacks the appeal to match its price.	11.2	11.5	1171	51.8	-
Astra 1.2 Turbo 130PS GS Line	★★★⯪☆	5.10.22	Family hatchback's gentle push upmarket is only a qualified success.	9.9	9.2	1304	55.3	-
Crossland X 1.2 Turbo 130PS Elite	★★★☆☆	7.6.17	Typically practical and well priced, but Vauxhall can do better.	9.8	10.3	1278	54.2	-
Mokka 1.2 Turbo 130PS Elite Nav Premium Auto	★★★⯪☆	12.5.21	The driving experience sells a brave design effort just a little short.	9.3	9.1	1238	48.6	-
Grandland X Hybrid4 Ultimate Nav	★★★☆☆	22.4.20	Inspires big expectations and delivers few, but it's an interesting fleet option.	-	-	1800	-	-
Combo Life 1.5 Turbo D 100PS Energy	★★★⯪☆	27.12.18	Usable, spacious and practical, if not very pretty to look at.	14.7	16.2	1552	60.1	-
VOLKSWAGEN								
Polo 1.0 TSI 95PS SE	★★★★⯪	31.1.18	Brings 'big car' space, class, kit and finish to this class like never before.	10.7	11.2	1145	57.1	-
Polo 2.0 TSI GTI+	★★★★☆	1.8.18	A usable, quick and vastly competent effort but not the most thrilling.	6.7	5.9	1342	46.8	-
Golf 1.5 eTSI 150PS Style DSG	★★★★⯪	22.7.20	Additional strengths and familiar ones carry it back to the class lead.	8.3	7.8	1330	60.0	-
Golf 1.5 TSI eHybrid Style	★★★★⯪	23.10.24	New plug-in Golf takes the PHEV hatchback's status to greater heights.	7.2	6.1	1619	46.5	-
Golf GTI	★★★⯪☆	25.9.24	'Mk8.5' version of hot hatchback is slick and effective but not a big enough step forward.	5.3	4.4	-	47.2	-
Golf R	★★★★☆	14.4.21	Most entertaining distillation of the Golf R formula yet – for a price.	4.4	3.7	1520	43.9	-
ID 3 Pro Performance Life	★★★★☆	31.3.21	Bland but with the substance to further the zero-emissions push.	7.0	6.5	1757	-	145
Arteon 2.0 BiTDI 240PS 4Motion R-Line	★★★⯪☆	27.9.17	Considered approach produces an executive flagship short on sparkle.	6.5	6.2	1866	55.6	-
Arteon eHybrid Elegance Shooting Brake	★★★⯪☆	9.6.21	Striking PHEV appears radical but upholds Volkswagen's traditions at heart.	7.1	6.0	1783	52.5	-
ID 7 Pro Match	★★★★⯪	13.3.24	Volkswagen finds some electric form in an unexpected format.	6.1	5.1	2162	-	239
T-Roc 2.0 TSI 190PS 4Motion SEL DSG	★★★★⯪	24.1.18	Shows performance verve, dynamic completeness and stylish swagger.	6.7	6.5	1534	37.5	-
T-Roc 1.5 TSI Evo R-Line Cabriolet DSG	★★⯪☆☆	10.6.20	It brings little worth having to the compact cabriolet niche.	-	-	1540	-	-
Tiguan 1.5 eTSI 150PS R-Line	★★★⯪☆	22.5.24	Functional and mature, but this isn't the engine or trim we would go for.	9.4	9.2	1606	44.9	-
ID 4 GTX Max	★★★⯪☆	27.10.21	GTX adds flavour to ID 4 but doesn't reimagine 'GTI' for the EV age.	6.2	5.6	2220	-	200
Touareg 3.0 TDI 4Motion R-Line Tech	★★★⯪☆	8.8.18	An inoffensive if forgettable bid at a luxury market breakthrough.	7.2	6.6	2292	41.6	-
Touareg 3.0 TSI eHybrid 4Motion Elegance	★★★⯪☆	5.6.24	It's versatile and likeably unpretentious but won't be a default company car choice.	6.2	5.7	2446	34.1	26
Touran 2.0 TDI 150PS SE Family DSG	★★★★☆	3.2.16	A spacious, refined and classy all-rounder – albeit a slightly bland one.	9.9	9.7	1666	-	-
Multivan 1.4 eHybrid Style	★★★★☆	8.3.23	Latest Volkswagen 'bus combines the best bits of both car and van.	8.4	7.1	2243	37.9	14
ID Buzz 77kWh Style Pro	★★★★☆	8.2.23	It costs plenty but offers versatility and luxury accomplishments.	9.5	9.1	2498	-	185
Grand California 600	★★★⯪☆	2.1.20	Grandest California is classy but not half as clever as its smaller namesake.	15.8	16.7	3095	28.5	-
Transporter Sportline Black Edition Kombi SWB	★★★☆☆	30.3.22	Not compromised but hardly enhanced by its sporting agenda.	9.1	9.0	2108	39.1	-
Passat eHybrid 204PS Elegance	★★★★☆	13.11.24	Rounded and with good PHEV credentials, but less compelling than its sibling car.	7.2	6.4	1836	44.5	73
VOLVO								
EX30 Single Motor Extended Range Plus	★★★☆☆	1.5.24	Not enough key strengths – and not enough Volvo pragmatism.	5.7	5.1	1779	-	179
C40 Recharge Twin Ultimate	★★★⯪☆	13.4.22	A transitional model for Volvo that doesn't go quite far enough.	4.4	3.6	2172	-	194
XC40 D4 AWD First Edition	★★★★⯪	7.2.18	Wieldy, classy and simple. As good as its bigger siblings, if not better.	8.5	8.5	1735	43.8	-
XC60 D4 AWD R-Design	★★★⯪☆	5.7.17	The right product at the right time but lacking the right dynamic finish.	8.9	8.9	1836	48.9	-
XC90 B5 AWD Ultra Bright	★★★⯪☆	2.7.25	Still a mature, versatile and wilfully unspectacular choice.	8.0	7.5	2117	37.0	-
V60 D4 Momentum Pro Auto	★★★★☆	27.6.18	Fine-looking, capable and practical estate with only a few demerits.	8.9	8.3	1669	43.1	-
V60 T6 Recharge AWD R-Design	★★★★⯪	21.9.22	Strong hybrid system gives ageing Volvo a lot of fresh appeal.	4.9	4.3	2036	38.0	51
V90 T6 Recharge AWD R-Design	★★★★⯪	11.11.20	Hardly revolutionary but exceptionally appealing nonetheless.	5.6	4.9	2109	41.9	-
XPENG								
G6 RWD Standard Range	★★★⯪☆	26.2.25	Chinese electric SUV lacks inspiration but has plenty of rational appeal.	6.8	6.2	2067	3.3	208

WHAT'S COMING WHEN

MG Cyberster 2+2 October

Four-seat coupé version of roadster will mark the 60th anniversary of the MGB GT.

Polestar 5 Late 2025

Porsche Taycan rival with a UK-engineered chassis, 800V electricals and nearly 900bhp.

Mercedes CLA EQ September

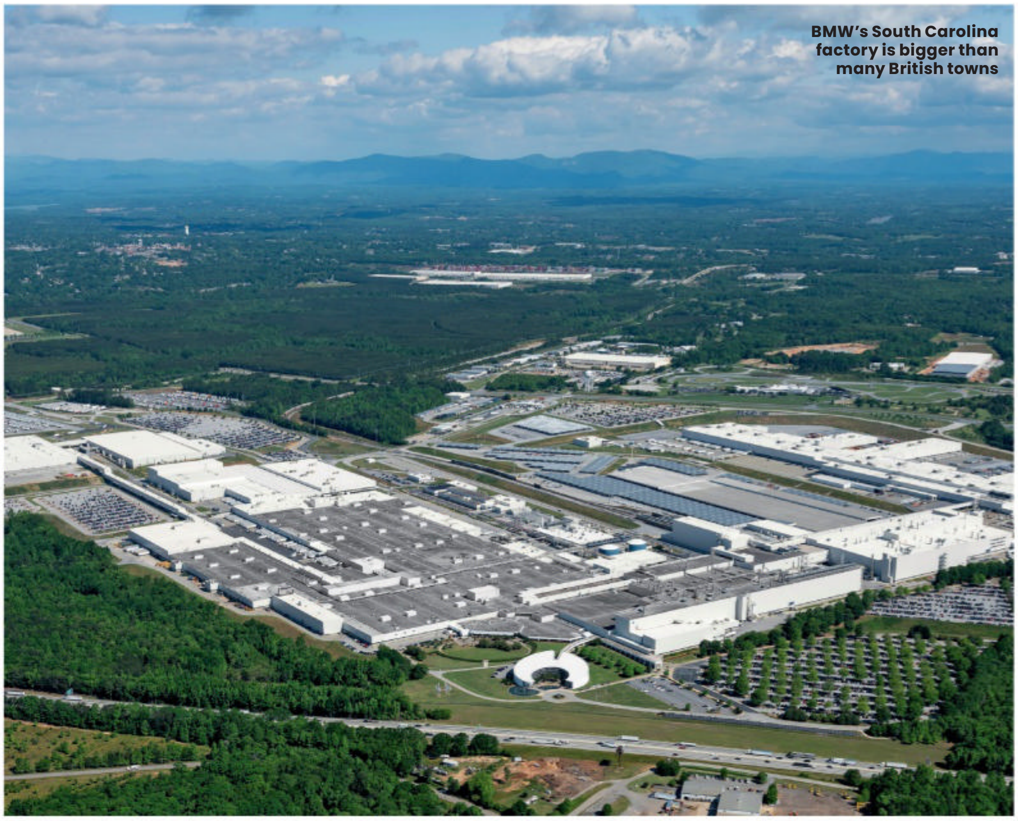
A whopping 5.0mpkWh means 483 miles per charge, making this the UK's longest-range EV.

SCAN THE CODE FOR THE FULL LIST

Why I love...
CAR FACTORIES

BY JAMES ATTWOOD

Heading into BMW's factory in Spartanburg, South Carolina, the tour guide asked if it was my first time in a car factory. Errr, no. Working for Autocar, I've spent a fair chunk of time donning ill-fitting high-viz jackets and other safety kit before traipsing through all manner of industrial facilities. The guide nodded, then asked: "Do you ever get bored of them?" I wasn't being polite when I answered: "Absolutely not."



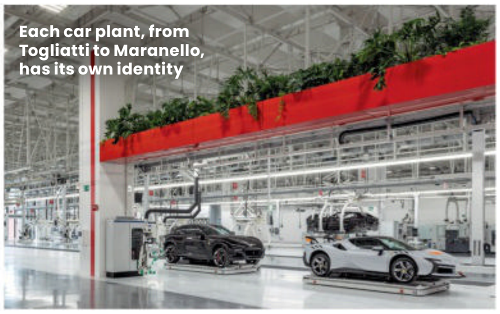
BMW's South Carolina factory is bigger than many British towns

Seriously, what's not to love about a car factory? Car plants are mind-bogglingly complex, vast operations, and no matter how many times you see one, it gives you fresh appreciation for this industry's brilliance. Watching a car being assembled by a combination of humans and robots as it ceaselessly snakes its way along a twisting, turning production line is a reminder of how complex such machines are.

It's always hard to comprehend the scale. You read that Plant Spartanburg produces more than 1500 vehicles per day, but it's only when you see the size of the factory that you fathom just how many cars that really is. The main 'spine' of the X3 production line at Spartanburg is one mile long, and it branches off at various points along the way. It is vast. And that's just one of two lines at the plant, which currently covers eight million square feet and employs 11,000 people.

Yet somehow, despite that enormous scale, 1500 times every day the exact parts needed for each car, from massive engines and specific body panels down to the tiniest bolts and screws, arrive in the right place at (just) the right time, down to the millisecond.

It's also a reminder of how intricate the whole process is. It's easy to think that designing a car is all sketching grilles and sculpting body panels, but stand in a factory and you're reminded someone has to work out exactly where each bolt and nut goes and how to fit it all together. Then you stand there a bit longer and try to fathom how on earth somebody worked out in which order those parts needed to be assembled – and at scale and unfathomable pace.



Each car plant, from Togliatti to Maranello, has its own identity

> **"I saw a burly Russian welding without a top on"**

There's another reason I never get bored of car factories: they're all different. Clearly the fundamentals are the same, but you absolutely see corporate and cultural differences in each.

Ferrari has just opened a new 'e-building' at Maranello, and even though it's ultra-modern and filled with natural light, there's still a hushed, near-devout feel to it. Up the road in Sant'Agata, Lamborghini mechanics crowd round a bench hand-assembling engines, looking more like open-heart surgeons. Volkswagen's Wolfsburg plant is all industrial chic and fuelled by currywurst, while in Toyota's Burnaston facility, pedestrians unfailingly obey the five rules of walking (seriously, it's a thing). Heck, several years back I visited the Lada factory in Togliatti (a trip unlikely to be repeated any time soon) and genuinely saw a burly Russian welding joints without a top on.

And even if they were all the same, I don't know how you would ever get tired of watching the relentless, unceasing operation. Car factories definitely aren't boring. Bring on the next one.

What we did this week

GOTTA GET PASTURE

You don't need a multimillion-pound autodrome designed by Hermann Tilke to run a motorsport event, just some cones and an empty field. That's all my local motor club needed for a summer autotest, and hustling my Subaru-engined buggy around the course was as enthralling as a lap of Sakhir – if a bit unwieldy, as it was built for hillclimbing. **SAM PHILLIPS**

BRISTOL, FASHIONED

What you see before you is the original aero model for the monstrous Bristol Fighter, used to refine the super-coupé's silhouette in Lotus's wind tunnel. I've always been intrigued by this obscure, V10-engined beast, so to see this bit of history behind it while at Hethel picking up our road test Evija was quite special. **JACK HARRISON**

OH MY CHRIST!

Some colleagues and I took a trip to the Beaulieu Motor Museum last weekend. The winding B-roads there were excellent and the icons on display were mesmerising. The biggest attraction for me, though, was a true motoring legend: Uncle Bryn's Citroën Xsara Picasso from the TV show Gavin & Stacey. Not interested? How about Smithy's Volvo 850S Estate or Gavin's Citroën Saxo VTS? **JACK WARRICK**

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